THE Reconstructionist

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Tenth Anniversary Issue

TO MORDECAI M. KAPLAN,

founder of the Jewish Reconstructionist movement,

in grateful appreciation of his inspiring leadership,

this issue is dedicated by his disciples on the Editorial Board.

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Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

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THE Reconstructionist

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EDITORIALS

OUR TENTH ANNIVERSARY

ANNIVERSARIES are usually occasions when one is disposed to "point with pride." But we do not want to observe our Tenth Anniversary in that spirit. There are two reasons why we should not.

In the first place, measured against the task of reconstructing Jewish life to enable it to thrive in the modern world, our achievement during the last ten years is little enough. We have, in this issue, assembled papers that touch on every phase of our program—Zionism, Jewish religion and ethics, Jewish education and culture, Jewish participation in American life, Jewish community organization—and every one of these papers reveals our awareness of unsatisfied wants and unfulfilled aspirations.

A second reason for humility is the realization that what has been so far accomplished is only in small measure our own achievement and must be accredited rather to the persistence and resurgence of the will-to-live and the will-to-salvation of our people. Not the man who presses the electric switch-button is mainly responsible for producing the light, but all who toil in the power-house and all who have labored for generations in the development of the physical sciences, and, beyond them and working through them, the Creator who, since the beginning of time, has ordained: "Let there be light!" All that we have done has been to press certain switch-buttons, as it were, which have released the spiritual energies of American Jews. We have given them a chance to express the undying will of the Jewish people to live the best life that it can conceive. By reinterpreting our tradition, we have converted the potential energy generated by the life-work of our ancestors into kinetic energy, into the electric current of modern thought and action. The ultimate source of all this energy is the Creator and Redeemer of all life—God. We could not have undertaken to initiate the Reconstructionist movement without faith in God, and we see, in the measure of success attained, a vindication of that faith. We therefore observe our anniversary in the spirit of the Psalmist who, on an occasion of national triumph, declared, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name, give glory for Thy kindness and Thy faithfulness."

Better than to use an anniversary for purposes of self-glorification is it to use the occasion for appraisal. What are some of the things that we have learned

in the ten years since we began publishing our magazine?

In the first place, we have been confirmed in our deepest intuition, the perception that, in a crisis, clear fundamental thinking and candid and lucid expression are necessary and are welcome. True, timid souls have resented our frank exposé of the inadequacies of traditional doctrines and practices to meet present needs. "Practical people," moreover, have at times, expressed the typical impatience of their kind with doctrinaire ideologies: "Never mind what people think or believe; it is only what they do that counts,"—as if what people do does not depend on what they are, and as if what they are is uninfluenced by what they think and believe. But we have, during these ten years, received gratifying evidence, in a constantly widening correspondence, of the relief and encouragement experienced by Jews who discovered for the first time, through our literature, a rationale for identifying themselves with the Jewish people, for participating in its culture and for communing with God through its ritual.

Our experience has further shown us the importance not merely of formulating a philosophy of Jewish life in general terms, but also of demonstrating its validity by continually pointing out its relevance to passing events. No feature of our magazine has been more popular than its editorial comment and the discussion of the realities and values revealed in items of news which would otherwise often pass unnoticed. By this running commentary on contemporary Jewish life, the implications of Reconstructionist doctrine are made explicit, and people who are too busy or too impatient to follow the intricacies of elaborate philosophic discussion catch the drift of our thought by its continual exemplification in the concrete issues of Jewish life

The experience of the last ten years has, moreover, demonstrated for us the possibility and value of group thinking, when the group is united by a common purpose. Cooperation *in action* by people with common interests can easily be effected by the simple expedient of majority rule, but cooperation *in thinking* has too often been inhibited by pride of opinion and by intellectual rivalries. This has again and again given the advantage to the forces of reaction and obstruction in our civilization, for the minds of the unreflective and intellectually immature can easily be regimented by propagandist appeals to prejudice, while liberal minds find it difficult to agree by very reason of the independence of their thinking. Where, however, there is disinterested devotion to a clearly defined ideal, it is possible for liberals to work together for common ends, to transcend their differences in personal outlook without obliterating them, and to achieve a synthesis of opinion that demonstrates the truth of the saying, "Two heads are better than one." Every editorial published in THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, its platform and its occasional anonymous pronouncements, as well as every project launched by the movement, is the product of an exchange of ideas. It is hoped that our experience in this respect will also be the experience of the Reconstructionist Fellowship Chapters in their efforts to advance the cause of Reconstructionism.

And this leads to the final lesson learned in our ten years experience as a movement—the impossibility of separating thought from action. When our magazine was first projected, we had no intention of functioning in any other way than as a school of thought. We wanted to expound the idea of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization, which to us was the key to a satisfactory adjustment of Judaism to the changed conditions of its life. We were willing to leave

to others the carrying out of this purpose. But "He who initiates a *mitzvah,*" say our Sages, "is told to complete it," and those who came under the influence of our ideology and felt its cogency began demanding that we do something toward its implementation. We had to proceed to the publication of other literature beside the magazine, literature that could be put to immediate use by organizations and individuals in directing their Jewish activities along Reconstructionist lines—new prayers and devotional texts, guides for study, pamphlets, advice on ritual observance, materials for celebration programs and the like. Every idea we advance is at once challenged by a demand for material to implement it.

But implementation cannot be effective merely through the printed word. Our movement must rally persons with a common purpose to work together for enriching their own lives and that of their fellow Jews, and for helping American Jewry to contribute to the welfare of the nation and of mankind. We have therefore had to create forms of association as well as literature—the Reconstructionist Foundation, the Reconstructionist Fellowship.

The establishment of the Reconstructionist Fellowship represents both the consumation of the first decade of Reconstructionism and the promise of the next decade. As pointed out at the commencement of this editorial, our achievement is meager compared with what remains to be achieved. The whole task of briging Reconstructionism home to our youth is one that is still only in its discussion stage. We therefore hope that all who read this Anniversary Issue will not only share our gratitude to God "for having kept us in life and sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion," but that they will also share with us the tasks which still remain to be done, and may God establish the work of our hands.

"FOR THE MIRACLES" OF OUR DAY

AS everyone knows by now (after ten years), we consider ourselves progressives in religion. This means that we are not shackled to such outworn creeds as might impede the full flight of our spirits. Yes, we are quite emancipated! But we have a confession to make: we think that all Americans, and especially all Jews, ought to gather in the houses of worship throughout the land and sing hymns and declare praises to signalize — a great miracle.

Do not press us too hard to define exactly what we mean by a "miracle"; but here is the record: Less than three years ago, the Nazis were on their way to conquering the world, and the Japanese had successfully swept all opposition before them in a tremendous offensive against the entire oriental world. Today, the American flag flies over Manila, and the Red Army stands close enough to Berlin for the Germans to hear the boom of Russia's powerful guns. All Africa is freed; France, Belgium, Poland are freed; Holland and Italy are all but cleared of the enemy. The Nazis are close to the end of their rope.

In our prayerbooks, for Hanukkah and Purim, there is a passage *"Al hanissim,"* in which we thank God for the "miracles" that occurred during the days of the Hasmoneans, and of Mordecai and Esther. Are the exploits of our heroes today any the less cause for wonder and humility? To be sure, the victory over the Syrians, and over Haman, did not solve all the problems; post-war questions existed then too. But the miracles were those of the downfall of foes whose threat seemed at one time unchallengeable.

Such are the miracles of our day. Let us not be too sophisticated about them. It is a time for prayer and thanksgiving.

A BUSINESS MAN LOOKS AT PROTESTANTISM

AT a recent dinner of the Protestant Council of the City of New York, Mr. John D. Rockefeller pleaded for a rebirth of Protestantism as a living force in American life. He deplored the emphasis upon denominationalism, the stress upon form and the neglect of the true spirit of religion. He pointed out how gravely the Church is being challenged to help build a new world, and how important it is for all Protestant forces to unite in order to meet that challenge. "The Church," he said, "has learned too little to speak their language, to think in terms of their environment, to meet their needs" ("their" referring to millions of those who have suffered during this war.)

Mr. Rockefeller's plea has much merit, and it applies to Jewish life as well as to Protestant life. Religion must be transposed into the key of understandable ideals and intelligible prayer and ritual, with the major emphasis upon the spiritual and ethical, with ritual seen only as a means. But, in reading the address, the careful observer notes the introduction of one theme in the argument which is disturbing. Rockefeller said: "I see one or two strong churches, uniting the Christian life of the town; great economy in plant, in money, in service, in leadership; the money thus saved available for home and foreign missions." Here the business man in Mr. Rockefeller emerges.

After all, contends the business man, if a merger will make the running of the plant more economical, then by all means merge. If all the Protestants believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, what do you need denominations for? The point might, indeed, be carried a step further: what do you need synagogues for; don't Jews also believe in these basic truths? Aye, there's the rub. Do Mr. Rockefeller and those who agree with him not believe that it is possible for churches to maintain their separate and distinctive characters, and at the same time cooperate, and stress the spiritual over the ritual?

The temptation is always before leaders, political, religious or any other kind, to solve the problem of differences by eliminating differences. Some years ago, quite respectable Americans, unable to cope with capital-labor differences, repeatedly said that what this country needed was a Hitler, a dictator. Periodically, Jewish laymen indict American Jewish groups for having different opinions and ideologies. "Why can't they all get together?" they cry. The truth is that mergers—or monopolies—are not always economically advantageous; and there is no guarantee that one monolithic body will be more ethical, more spiritual, or more progressive than many small ones.

We would have hailed Mr. Rockefeller's speech unqualifiedly if he had confined himself to a plea for the reborn Church whose "atmosphere would be one of warmth, freedom and joy, so sympathetically and distinctly manifest as to attract and win into its fellowship all those men who are striving to live useful and worthy lives." But since he implied that this cannot be achieved unless there be a surrender of individuality, a repudiation of sacred associations and ceremonies, and the creation of a completely homogeneous religious institution, we must warn that Christians (and Jews too) are likely to resist being "coordinated."

They will certainly respond to an appeal for a vitalized faith; but they will want to express that faith, each group in its own way, even if to do so costs a little more money.

HENRIETTA SZOLD

AS we go to press, we learn of the sad news that Henrietta Szold is dead. It is too soon and we are too deeply grieved by the news of her death to attempt an appraisal of all that she has meant to her people and done for them, and for those of all races and faiths who have benefited by her deeds or come under the spell of her personality. Founder of Hadassah, organizer and director of Youth Aliyah, indefatigable pleader for the rights of her people and of all peoples to security, health, education and the opportunity for decent living —who can assess the legacy of good works that she has left us?

But not her works were her greatest achievement or her richest bequest to us, but herself, the example of a life of utter consecration to an exalted ideal. She belongs not only in the ranks of the great, whose rare gifts and creative insight have produced social changes from which mankind has benefited; she belongs to that rarer company of saintly souls whose every casual act, whose day to day intercourse with men and women in every walk of life, was illumined by a spiritual quality that brought out the best in them. She carried out, to the letter, the rabbinic injunction to be as scrupulous about the small *mitzvah* as about the great. In an age more deeply religious and less sophisticated than ours, her personality would have inspired the sort of awe that would have invested her with a halo of legend and miracle.

God knows that we need such souls today, as perhaps never before. At a time in which we have had such clear evidence of the potentialities of human depravity, of the depths of sin and corruption to which human nature can sink, we need to be able from time to time to avert our eyes from those abysses and to fix our gaze on personalities that reveal the higher reaches of the human spirit. What a boon, then, to our generation, is a personality like Henrietta Szold's, steeped in kindness and compassion, patient and courageous, loving God with all her heart, soul and might, and her neighbor as herself!

And is Henrietta Szold now dead? It cannot be. A soul such as hers is immortal. She lives, as she has ever lived, "in the ranks of the holy and the pure who shine with the brightness of the firmament." May the spirit of Henrietta Szold find new incarnations among the people whom she loved and served.

REALITIES AND VALUES

DR. HARLAN H. HORNER IS secretary of the Council of Dental Education of the American Dental Association. He recently stirred up a hornets' nest by urging a correction of the "racial imbalance" in dental colleges, notably in those of Columbia and New York University. Chancellor Harry W. Chase of N.Y.U. promptly rejected Dr. Horner's recommendations. A group of educational leaders were moved by the Horner report to appeal to President Roosevelt for the creation of a Fair Educational Practices Committee to help eliminate quotas and other forms of racial and religious discrimination in the nation's colleges. That is a good move. Such euphemistic phrases as "racial imbalance" should not fool us, nor should the protestations of Dr. Horner that he is no anti-Semite. The advocates of the *numerus clausus* in Europe used to speak that same language. But the *numerus clausus* ("quota" in American) cracked open the door for uglier forms of anti-Semitism, for ghetto benches, book-burnings, synagogue burnings, mass murder.

THE GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE last year spent $992,000 (raised mostly from Jewish taxes) on the education of 96,000 Arab children, and only $300,000 on that of 86,000 Jewish children. The Vaad Leumi spent $3,280,000 for the education of Jews. It is fair enough, if the Jews are more prosperous than the Arabs, that they should pay a proportionately larger share of the Palestine government's educational budget—provided that the government does not discriminate in its expenditure of the funds between Arab and Jewish children. But it is not fair that the per capita expenditure for the education of Jewish children should be only about one-third that for the education of Arabs. If Jews want to supplement the inadequate educational budget of the state by funds of their own that is their privilege, but this does not exempt the government from its equal responsibility for the education of its Jewish and of its Arab citizens.

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JUDGE PROSKAUER, IN PRESENTING the American Jewish Committee's proposals with regard to Palestine, made a strong plea to Zionists to give up their "extreme" demands in the interest of Jewish unity, and to accept the Committee's more moderate proposals in their stead. In the Committee's proposals there is no reference to the right of the Jews as a people to reconstitute Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth or even to establish themselves as a majority in their national home. Its program must, therefore, be unacceptable to Zionists. From Judge Proskauer, a plea for Jewish unity directed to Zionists comes with little grace. He participated in the first session of the American Jewish Conference. He had every opportunity to air his views there. He availed himself of that opportunity, but his views were not adopted. Those of the Zionists were. Whereupon he led the Committee over which he presides out of the Conference. If he wants unity, let him seek readmission into the Conference and urge from within a reopening of the subject of Palestine policy, promising to abide by the decision of the majority. It was not the Zionists who violated the principle of Jewish unity, but Judge Proskauer and the American Jewish Committee.

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DR. SAMUEL DININ, FOR PRACTICALLY the entire decade of Reconstructionist history an associate editor of the magazine, has left New York to take up his duties as Director of the Bureau of Jewish Education in Los Angeles. We shall miss his amiable personality at the Editorial Board meetings; we hope that his duties will not cause us to miss too many of his editorial contributions. On leave of absence from the Teachers Institute, which recently awarded him a Citation, he may be back with us after a time. In the meanwhile, however, we want Los Angeles to know that our loss is its gain; and we expect of the Jews of Los Angeles that they will appreciate him as we have always done.

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COINCIDING ALMOST TO THE week with the observance of our 10th anniversary, "Conservative Judaism," a quarterly, makes its appearance on the American Jewish scene. It is published by the Rabbinical Assembly of America. We welcome our new contemporary, and wish it success. With an organ of expression now at hand, the members of the Rabbinical Assembly should take advantage of the opportunity to engage in full and frank discussion concerning the question: What shall Conservative Judaism be? In the first issue, "Conservative Judaism" lists the full complement of its affiliated organizations. This is in inter-

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The Two-Fold Task of Zionism

By DAVID POLISH

ZIONISM stands on two levels, the immediate and the ultimate. The concern of the immediate level is the elimination of Jewish homelessness through the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. The concern of the ultimate level is the regeneration of Judaism through Palestine. The first is the indispensable condition for the second. The second must be the unconditional consequence of the first. The early debates as to which is preferable have been rendered academic by history. The dispute between Ahad Ha'Am and Herzl on a political versus a cultural center appears unrealistic today. The cleavage was resolved in a classic symposium which appeared in *He'atid* and which was called *Al Ha-Yahadut V'al Atidoteha* (Concerning the Future of Judaism). One of the participants, Martin Buber, crystallized the problem as follows: "In our own time, our youth will go up to their own land. A day will come when a new nation will be born there. But, lest there occur an aggrandizement of life alone instead of an aggrandizement of culture as well, a spark must be struck over that void, the spark of religious revival."

In relation to Palestine, Reconstructionism has contributed significantly and must increasingly contribute to the synthesis of both levels of Zionism. This is a task which can most effectively be achieved by a movement whose objective is the cultivation of Jewish life in its totality, and a Jewish national movement in its totality.

The Neo-Emancipation Doctrine

On the immediate level, Zionism is based upon two factors—justifiable skepticism and necessary idealism. The skepticism of the Zionist is rooted in history and confirmed by current events.

In our day, a neo-emancipation movement has been launched by certain Jewish groups. This movement propounds the following proposition:

Implicit in the liberation of Europe will be the liberation of its Jews. Europe will be democratically constituted. In a democracy, special protection and guarantees for ethnic and religious minorities are superfluous because such guarantees imply potential restrictions. In a democracy, the individual, whoever he may be, is assured of inalienable rights, and that is enough. The minority treaties of 1919 failed precisely because they dealt with designated groups rather than with individuals. Therefore, an international bill of human rights within a democratic European society will assure Jews full equality.

This, of course, is the philosophy of the Emancipation all over again. What is the record of the Emancipation? Engendered in an age when concepts of the social contract and natural rights prevailed, the Emancipation sought to cope with the Jewish problem from the point of view of human rights. Christian Wilhelm Dohm, a friend of Mendelssohn, invoked the rights of man in championing Emancipation. The Jews of Paris based their claim on their rights as human beings. So also did the Jews of

Alsace-Lorraine and of Holland. In 1796, in the Batavian Assembly, the author of a declaration states that it suffices for the Jew to say, "I am a human being." However, the logic of this position was shattered by the reality of the European world's attitude toward the Jew. He was to learn that formulas do not alter social conditions. Ezekiel Kaufman tells us, "True, the Jews were emancipated . . . but their legal condition was based on a fictitious premise, namely, that they had ceased to be a nation . . . the law might accept the principle that the Jews were no longer a nation but a religious community alone. . . . However, the living people never ceased to feel that the Jew was a stranger to it, that he was not one of its sons. It did not feel inwardly and truly that the Jewish tribe had a share in the national privileges of its land."

Actually, the Emancipation was not a social contract, but a unilateral arrangement whereby surrender of group identity was extracted from the Jew in return for liberties that could always be rescinded. It was to be discovered that liberties could be withdrawn from "human beings" as well as from "Jews." The Christian world was not impressed with this clever distinction. Intuitively, it realized that, if Jews organized and propagandized for their own dissolution, this too was a perverted form of group consciousness and group survival. Herder could understand Jewish distinctiveness. His "glorification of ancient Hebrew poetry was merely in line with his sincere conviction that diversity of culture, rather than cosmopolitan leveling of differences is the aim of historical evolution. This eloquent proclamation [states] that the older a people, the more distinctive its individuality; that Israel's chosenness is the essence of Jewish history and that the burden of the law is an integral part of Judaism." The same Herder, confronting "human" Jews, could not understand the elimination of the Jewish ethnic character. He stated that the Jew had been and remained a stranger to Europe. He was bound to a Torah, a way of life, a way of thinking altogether foreign to Europe. Therefore, the problem is: How can he be assimilated without injury to the assimilating body? The problem is aggravated because it cannot be solved through conversion, since Christianity no longer accepts converts with open arms.

The best refutation of the neo-emancipation doctrine appeared in the January 9, 1945 issue of the New York *Times*. Through a classic irony, the following statement, in extract, was published by the National Committee of Americans of Polish Descent. It was headlined: *The Poles Are Also People with Human Rights.* "We . . . join with you in believing that no force of violence . . . must . . . deter mankind from a full realization of the noble precepts of the International Bill of Human Rights . . . we appeal to you, not to exclude the Polish people from the International Bill of Human Rights. . . . Let this hard-pressed people, too, share the benefits of the International Bill of Rights."

Justifiable Skepticism

The European climate has not improved since the Emancipation and post-Emancipation period. It has deteriorated. No one is deceived by euphemistic references to human rights when everyone knows that the fate of the Jew is at stake. Every minority group in Europe will say, "Yes, we endorse an International Bill of Human Rights. Now what are you going to do about *us*?" Thus, the problem is not tackled but merely tabled by a parliamentary trick. Our justifiable skepticism is based on two considerations. The first is the mood of the world today. We ought to be as bitterly realistic as possible. If the American government, with a great show of generosity, admits

fewer than a thousand refugees, then this act of political cynicism reflects a very discouraging world situation. Jacob Lestschinsky tells us, "Just as a sick person cannot be comfortable under any circumstances, neither can the ailing and landless Jewish people. The more nationally homogeneous the component units of the future European Federation will be, the more tragic will be the position of the Jewish minority. Remaining virtually alone amid unified national enclaves, the struggle of the Jewish minority for equal rights will become even more difficult than before, while its chances of retaining its own national spirit and mode of living will become even slighter."

The fact that Holland, Denmark, and Sweden have shown Christian charity to the Jew must elicit our ever-lasting gratitude, but unfortunately, contributes little to the solving of the problem. These countries do not contain large masses of Jews, nor are they likely to do so.

Our skepticism is aroused further by the nature of the proposed human rights themselves. They are predicated on nothing more substantial than the aspirations of their authors and underwriters. An orphan ideal, namely an ideal without a powerful parent to protect it, can prove dangerous because it may lead simple believers to unwarranted expectations. In public affairs, a proposal devoid of the means of giving it life, is regarded as deliberately misleading and deceptive, usually contrived to thwart a rival proposal or to discharge an odious obligation cheaply. Group rights are, at best, arrested and potential realities. They are worthless unless they are conditional upon enforcement and concrete acts demonstrating honorable intent by the givers of the rights. As long as these conditions are not met, no bill of rights can survive. See what the Congress of Vienna did to European Jewry in 1815.

A Jewish homeland, however feeble, holds infinitely greater promise for protecting its Jewish citizens, because its will is enforced by instruments, conceived and used by the people for their own benefit. What is more, it represents more than a verbal assent by the nations of the world. It represents a concrete act on their part, niggardly and grudging though it be, intended to give reality to their desire to solve the Jewish problem. To this extent, they have a stake and a responsibility in the matter. They may try to squirm and evade, but they have committed themselves by a deed. A deed, a *fait accompli,* is harder to undo than a pronouncement. The Greeks betrayed are still Greeks on their own soil. European Jewry betrayed is lost.

Why a Jewish State?

Pressure of events has brought many an anti-Zionist to the acceptance of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. But why a government when a refuge will serve the purpose equally well? The essence of Jewish misery has been the inability of the European Jew to regulate, even in the feeblest way, the conditions of his existence. The weaker a people, the more limited its power to manipulate circumstances to its own advantage. But the Jew, far from being able to manipulate, was paralyzed. *Galut* meant absence of the means of salvation. In this generation, it has meant deterioration from *de facto* to *de jure* statelessness which will not be remedied too easily or too quickly. Self-government means some degree of ability to cope with trouble. It is a form of protection, multiplied as governments draw together for mutual aid. A stateless Jewry in Palestine is threatened with the same disabilities that Jewry suffers in Europe. It means succumbing to the mercies of surrounding powers all over again. It means transfer of the *galut* and its evils to Palestine. A people that can-

not regulate its own means of defense, its own acquisition of land, its own immigration—a people which depends upon its human status alone, and allows its specific claims as a people to go by default, will suffer encroachment and disaster by enemies who do not recognize human rights.

Just as it is important to scrutinize skeptically events in our time, so is it important to consider the possibility of Zionism in a more liberal world. In that event, the rebirth of the Jewish people in Palestine would be encouraged by the nations of the world. They would not insist upon the obliteration of the Jewish ethnic character. They would be prepared to accept the Jewish people as a co-worker in the building of an interdependent world. If the present blockade of Palestine is a sign of reaction in the world, the sign of liberalism would be free access to Palestine, and self-government in a Jewish commonwealth. A liberal world would not urge Emancipation as an alternative to Zionism, for Emancipation would be recognized for what it is—conditional individual life in return for unconditional group death.

Reconstructionism and the Ultimate Aim of Zionism

Just as the immediate level of Zionism is devoted to the Jewish people, so must the ultimate level be devoted to Judaism. The long awaited clarification of Palestine's status — favorable, we hope — will confront Reconstructionism with a unique challenge, the challenge of guarding the spiritual values inherent in Zionism. The Reconstructionist program, in its very nature, embraces these values. Once a Jewish commonwealth is achieved, their preservation will require the sponsorship of a special body, just as the political objectives of Zionism require a special body, just as the men of Safed not only preserved but engendered the sanctities of Israel upon Palestinian soil. The danger of indifference to spiritual values or the repudiation of them is ever present in a popular movement. Mass movements too often trample upon their own ideals. It should, therefore, be an imperative task of Reconstructionism to serve as that agent which will constantly keep Israel aware of its moral responsibilities to Zionism. It comes to this function legitimately, having consistently stressed the deeper implications of the movement. There are a number of results which can and should accrue from Palestine.

Religious Conseqences of Zionism

The first is religious. In his "The Jew in Our Day," Waldo Frank writes, "This Jewish 'remnant' — and only the remnant, through the ages, has preserved the Jew—will be loyal to the classes of social progress; but through its consciousness of God it will be still separate, and must remain so. . . . The God in man will be the still secret treasure it must lovingly nurture against the day when men, free of fear and hunger, learn to look within themselves where God lives. Thus, the Jews will still be a peculiar people. And they will be subject to the dislike and distrust of the zealot for whom the word 'God' is anathema; although it was in the name of God that his values of social justice and individual dignity were preserved and prepared, through the barbaric ages."

Certainly, the rebellion against human exploitation has been made manifest in Palestine. The affirmation of human dignity and the worth of the individual have been made manifest in Palestine. Every Jewish settlement, with its own jealously cherished way of life, with its own unique deviations from its sister settlements, represents not only an economic and social experiment, but a serious enterprise in personal and group salva-

tion. (It is surprising that Waldo Frank, whose spiritual program is so challenging, should fail to discern these things in Palestine.) No other self-conscious Jewry has been so uninhibited in casting off the soul-corroding social and economic evils of our time, and in embracing new ways to redemption.

I am aware that this in itself is not religion, even as I recognize the inadequacy of Harold Laski's attempt to classify the social impulses of communism as an expression of a new type of faith. But these elements are nevertheless the raw material from which religion ultimately springs. The efforts to salvage the Jewish religion through minor repairs like new prayer books and more felicitously phrased liturgies and lovelier rituals are inadequate; to limit ourselves to such efforts betrays a failure to understand the basic untenability of religion today. For religion suffers not from aesthetic but from ideological defects — an inability adequately to interpret the problems of the person and of the group. If this interpretation will demand a new type of religious expression, hitherto unheard of and perhaps startling to the traditional mind, it will nevertheless take its place in Jewish life, and it will arise in the Yishuv. What its form will be we cannot tell. But it will be the outgrowth of a way of life, and its symbolism will therefore answer to the people's soul and aspirations as authentically as a bell answers to the push of a button.

The willingness to experiment boldly, not merely to tamper, is the promise of new and significant religious forms and ideas in the Yishuv. We should not be afraid of new and strange departures, raw and crude as they may appear to us. They reveal the gropings of the human spirit, and this is more significant than the hallowed barnacles of ancient formalisms that attach themselves to synagogue, *shul,* and temple. These groupings are attested to by the expressions of some of the Yishuv's leading spirts. One of them, Bialik, wrote:

"This land has been endowed with a special gift — to convert, in the end of days, small things into great. About four thousand years ago, there gathered in this land bands of wandering shepherds from Ur of the Chaldees, Aram, Egypt, and the Western Arabian desert. From them there grew . . . a small people—Israel. Few and evil were the days of this people upon its soil. . . . Yet it gave rise to simple men—shepherds, farmers, tenders of sycamore trees . . . who bore the storm of God's spirit in their hearts and His thunder and lightning upon their lips. These men, addressing folk and man, prophesying concerning the events of their own generation—these apparently little men dared to face eternity, the heavens and the earth, and they finally gave the world the cornerstone for its religious and moral culture. From beyond hundreds of generations and above the heads of nations rising and falling upon the stage of history, their voice reaches us. Today it is more mighty and exalted and fuller of the power of the Lord than ever before. . . . After the Cyrus Declaration tens of thousands of exiles from Babylon gathered again in this parched land. They became again a small and impoverished community, smaller and more impoverished than even at first. Hardly three hundred years passed, and from this little land rose another Jew . . . who brought a message of redemption to the heathen world. . . . About two millenia have passed, but the idols have not yet passed from the earth. And now the Balfour Declaration! Israel gathers in its land for the third time. Why cannot the miracle occur again?"

Social Consequences of Zionism

Zionism implies certain social possibilities. Palestine has already proved that it alone has been capable of group regeneration. In addition to the rescue of European Jewry's remnants, Palestine has also restored to Judaism withered and decaying communities which are taking on new vigor. The Yemenites are one example. Here is one Jewry whose transplanting to Palestine means the preservation of a unique civilization which is already enriching our cultural soil. Palestine will continue to draw settlers from the moribund and deteriorating Jewries from the Near East, Africa, and the Mediterranean areas. These branches of Jewish life, which we had all but written off as remote, obscure, and going to seed, will experience not only a *tehiat hametim* but a transformation in Palestine. They will in turn contribute to its ever-expanding folk life. In addition, these various elements, together with the great bodies of Jews from all over Europe will go into the making of what may justifiably be called a diversified homogeneity. They will be the many contours of the face of Palestinian Jewry. This homogeneity would be analagous to that of the scores of racial and social elements in America.

Cultural Consequences of Zionism

Palestine has already contributed and will continue to contribute to a revival of Jewish culture. This culture has already proved that it is adaptable for export and can thrive on other soils. Its greatest value has been its folk character. Not since the Hasidim gave Judaism folk music, folk dance, folk literature and folk ways, has anything comparable occurred in Jewish life. It is good and well to say that there is nothing magical about Palestinian soil, and that other Jewries can do the same. The fact remains that we in America have strained and groaned with false labor in the creation of a group cultural pattern. This does not by any means imply that we must be dependent upon Palestine, that we are incapable of creativity. Perhaps Palestine may yet stimulate American Jewry (as it has in some respects already) to produce something comparable. All of which will be for the good. Meanwhile, we have been enriched by the songs, the revitalized festivals fraught with new significance, the educational content, and the contagious fervor generated by the Jews of Palestine. All this is due to the mass character of Zionism. It has touched off enthusiasm and devotion nowhere else approximated in Jewish life. In Zionism, these cultural contributions are the end product of a people in motion, of a people endowed with a sense of direction. This folk character is duplicated in America only in those areas which have themselves been infected with the Zionist impulse.

The Healing Influence of Zionism

There is a psychological element in the ultimate level of Zionism. It involves, first, the healing of the schism with respect to the place of Judaism in the world. The long-festering scholastic inquiry into what is Jewish and what is human is the spiritual equivalent of neo-emancipation's damaging distinction between Jew and human in the political realm. The spurious dichotomies which infest the Jewish spirit, as a recent symposium of young Jewish writers indicates, can be shattered in a Jewish homeland, and, by its example, in other Jewries as well. Zionism can also dispel the pathological relationship of many Jews to Judaism by virtue of anti-Semitism. No one has any illusions about the abating of anti-Semitism for a long time, even with a Jewish commonwealth. But it is equally evident that Palestinian Jews do not suffer from the unique men-

tal anguish which accompanies anti-Semitism and which plagues many Jews elsewhere. Identification with Judaism through terror alone is not likely in Palestine. It is not likely that Palestinian Jewish organizations will adopt the slogan, "Millions for defense, but not one cent for *tarbut.*"

Zionism as a Unifying Influence

Finally, the ultimate level of Zionism promises personal satisfactions through the creation of an authentic criterion of the individual's identification with world Jewry. In our time, this identification has depended largely upon suffering, a factor not to be deprecated, but certainly neither beneficial nor of our choosing. The affirmation by some that world Jewry is bound together by religion is hollow. The very advocates of this proposition would sooner admit their non-Jewish wives to membership in their synagogues (if they are affiliated) than admit an East Side Jew. Our religious unity is an objective, not a reality. The convergence of Jews from all over the world upon Palestine, world Jewry's direct assistance to them, world Jewry's concern for the welfare of the Yishuv, its labors in behalf of the Yishuv — all of these factors provide a magnetic center for the unification of our people and for a more personal and positive sense of belonging to one's people on the part of the individual Jew. This prospect perhaps underlies the violent anti-Zionism of some Jews who see in Palestine a force making for their identity with Jewry. More and more, Jews will make trips to Palestine. They will send their children there on scholarships and on visits. The land will increasingly become the personal spiritual possession of widening areas of world Jewry.

In conclusion, it must be stressed that Jewry outside of Palestine need not serve in a passive and receptive capacity. The spiritual gifts which have been mentioned may be our possession, too. Perhaps the very intensity of Jewish life in Palestine will awaken us to our own latent potentialities. Perhaps that *"hikui shel hit-harut"* (emulation through competitive zeal) of which Ahad Ha'Am wrote, will take hold of us. If we can be impelled to achievement which will lift us beyond dependence upon Palestine, that too will be a victory. But implicit in that victory will be the regenerative power whose origins are in Zionism.

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST SEAL

THE seal is a graphic representation of the Reconstructionist program. The form is that of a wheel. The hub of the wheel is Palestine, the center of Jewish civilization from which all the dynamic forces of Judaism radiate. Religion, culture and ethics are the spokes by which the vital influence of Palestine affects and stimulates Jewish life everywhere and enables it to make its contribution to the civilization of mankind. The wheel has an inner and an outer rim. The inner rim represents the Jewish community that even in the dispersion, maintains its contact with the Jewish civilization rooted in Palestine, by the spiritual bonds of religion, ethics and culture. The outer rim is the general community, for us the community of America, with which the Jewish civilization as lived by the Jewish community maintains contact at every point. The seal thus symbolizes the whole philosophy of the Reconstructionist movement.

(Reprinted from our issue of Mar. 3, 1944)

Reconstructionism and the Jewish Religion – a Stocktaking

By MILTON STEINBERG

IF it be true that *lo ha-midrash 'ikkar ella ha-maaseh,* that not doctrine matters in the end but practice, not theory but application, where does Reconstructionism stand at the end of its first decade? What, more particularly, has been its record with reference to the Jewish religion.

Reconstructionism at the Outset of Its Career

Ten years ago Reconstructionism was, as *midrash,* a finished job. Ideologically it was complete almost to the last detail. Here and there one could espy a rough edge or an unpolished facet. But most of its surface was smooth; certainly every structural prop and joint was firm. So much one man had wrought by rigorous thought and travail — a key conception of Judaism as the evolving religious civilization of the Jewish people, and its implications for every area of Jewish life from ritual to community organization.

This basic definition illumined with especial clarity the problems of the Jewish religion. Here three issues demanded determination.

First: Is religion dispensable in Jewishness, as secularists claim, or essential, as runs the counter-contention?

Second: Granted a religionist answer to Question One, what is the relation of religion to Judaism? Is it the whole story or only a part? And if the latter, what is its status among the other elements and against the entirety?

Third: How shall Jews treat with Jewish religion? Shall they accept without change traditional articles of faith, ceremonials, and worship forms? Or shall they hazard new departures? And if so, how shall such ventures be regulated and controlled; to what ends directed?

On each of these crucial items, Reconstructionism, as long as ten years ago, had thought its way through to a mature conclusion. It insisted, first of all, on the indispensability of religion to Judaism, repudiating the secularization of Judaism as inconsistent with its historic character and as unequal to the needs, individual and communal, of modern Jews.

In the opposite direction, Reconstructionism denied that Judaism and the Jewish religion were interchangable terms. Religion might be the largest ingredient in Jewishness, the most potent and most precious. It might further interpenetrate all the others, so that it could never be escaped, no matter where one laid hold of Jewish affairs. But it was nevertheless one entity among several.

Reconstructionism was equally lucid on the third enigma of modern Jewish religion — the question of tactic. Tersely, bluntly, Reconstructionists prefixed the word "evolving" to the phrase "religious civilization." Had they been less explicit, their position would still have been unmistakable. A creed may remain fixed; a civilization is not only susceptible, it is predisposed toward change. From the beginning then, Reconstructionists maintained that Jewish belief, ethic, ritual, and worship must be continually modified along with increasing knowledge, changing circumstances, and expanding horizons of aspiration. In asserting the propriety of growth in Judaism, they were not unaware of the connotations of their doctrine. They knew that the growth process in any of its manifestations involves on the one hand the retention of the old,

and on the other its continuous transcendence by the new. To this rule, the growth of religion was no exception. Judaism, if it were to be in fact what they conceived it to be, must, at one and the same time, hold firmly to the bulk of the tradition, reject its obsolete elements as these came to be outmoded, and create constantly novel insights and fresh vessels of expression.

Progress in Reconstructionist Thinking on Religion

This rationale of the Jewish religion, for all its maturity a decade ago, was not immune, indeed by Reconstructionist premises could not be immune, to further development. In at least two respects it has unfolded subsequently.

Reconstructionism has, I believe, matured theologically. Ten years, admittedly, is a short span for charting directions. Yet this decade seems to me to reveal a determinable tendency in Reconstructionist speculation concerning Deity. At the beginning, all faith-ideas were likely to be construed in terms of their psychological and sociological implications. God tended to become the God "conception." Religious metaphysics, termed personal religion, was likely to be neglected.

Today, after years of discussion and debate, matters of doctrine are still regarded as "personal" religion. They are, however, the centers of keener interest and closer attention. The philosophical areas of religious belief have come into their own. God no longer drifts as by some irresistable tropism toward the God "idea." He is approached also as a *Ding an sich,* a Being of infinite relevance not only for what He means in our lives but for what He is in Himself.

With this rebirth of metaphysical speculation among Reconstructionists has gone also a shift in the conception of God. Ten years ago the standard formula ran that God was to be envisaged as the sum of those forces that make for the enhancement of life. Unquestionably men have always found their most vivid experiences of Deity in those aspects of reality which cause them to feel human existence worth while. But God is first of all a Being — a truth heretofore somewhat muted by Reconstructionists zealous to derive the implications of His existence. How far Reconstructionism has progressed in thought and in accuracy of expression can be seen by contrasting the earlier description of Godhood with that set forth in the Introduction to the forthcoming Sabbath Prayer Book. (*Reconstructionist,* Vol. X, No. 11).

In one further and most important fashion, Reconstructionism has grown in the last ten years. It has worked out a system of criteria for the control of Jewish ritual changes. A decade ago, the *midrash* urged the retention of the bulk of traditional observances. Yet it argued at the same time the need to abandon outworn practices, to modify others that could be made more effective by refashioning, to create new forms. The theory, however, had almost nothing to say on how these multiple and diverse courses could be followed simultaneously; it gave no guidance on how these various purposes were to be reconciled. In other words, it put forth no standards for either the traditionalism or the progress it recommended. This void was filled with the publication of the brochure entitled *Toward A Guide for Jewish Ritual Usage,* a preliminary exploration of the problem of ritual practice in America.

This booklet offers no counsel to the Orthodox who stand fast by the tradition exactly as it has come down from the past, nor to "old line" Reform Jews blithely indifferent to history, nor to secularists who reject religion altogether. It addresses itself rather to those American Jews who want the Jewish religion in their lives, who want to live out their

faith in worship and ritual, who want that worship and ritual to be of a piece with the design that sanctified and was hallowed by their ancestors, but who want also that their worship and ritual shall be reflective of their own thoughts, needs, aspirations, and circumstances.

Such Jews, in all likelihood the larger part of American Jewry, have been left heretofore almost altogether without direction. There has been much talk for a long time about adapting Judaism to its changing scene. The leaders of Conservative Judaism for almost half a century have been exercised over the problem of modifying historic practices. Of late, "new line" Reform rabbis have been busy with the converse of the same issue — the task of retrieving valuable ancestral customs and ceremonials abandoned during the first generations of emancipation. All in all, were words deeds, Conservative Judaism would long since have molded the tradition closer to the heart's desires and life's necessities; Reform would have retreated from its detraditionalization; between the two, a normative American Judaism would have been established.

Words, alas, are words. And for all the blizzard of them there was no attempt, until the Reconstructionists ventured it, to harmonize in concrete detail the two ideals of tradition and progress to which so many paid obeisance. The pamphlet, *Toward a Guide for Jewish Ritual Usage,* important for its content, is even more consequential as a symbol and precedent. Here for the first time Jews who admit the claims of past and present alike seek seriously to arbitrate between them, to discover principles for doing justice to both, and to explore the connotations of these principles for flesh and blood Jews, real situations, and specific practices.

The Guide is designedly tentative both on matters of doctrine and application alike. That is why it is entitled "*Toward* a Guide." And since its appearance Reconstructionists have, except in the realm of worship, made no attempt to implement its findings. Painfully aware that Jewish life is already splintered and disorganized, they are reluctant to split it further by the establishment of another Jewish denomination. They prefer to influence the already existent parties, stimulating Conservatism to do something about the progressivism it professes, and Reform to incarnate the retraditionalization it proclaims. How Reconstructionists will comport themselves, should either or both bodies remain inert, cannot be predicted now. It is to be hoped that they shall never have to face so painful a situation, that both groups will soon begin to move toward their announced objectives. If the event turns out so, Reconstructionism will have played no slight part in bringing it to pass. In any case it has already done valiantly in prodding the slothful, and in making plain a road along which they may move when at last they bestir themselves.

Some Reconstructionist Achievements In the Area of Religion

Such, with more recent addenda, is the Reconstructionist *midrash* on the Jewish have been the practical accomplishments?

Let it be observed first of all that our distinction between the theoretical and the practical must not be pressed too far. A theory is not necessarily unpractical. Mental perplexity and spiritual confusion are real experiences. Whatever relieves them is in all actuality of pragmatic import. Nor is it the less substantial because it is cast in concepts rather than in objects. In sum, the Reconstructionist ideology is itself a practical contribution. By resolving the intellectual dilemmas in which Jews are involved, it removes one of the most formidable barriers between them and the Jewish religion.

Again, Reconstructionism has fur-

nished American Jewry with a forum for the presentation of religious ideas, a seed bed for their cross-fertilization. *The Reconstructionist* magazine is almost unique among American Jewish publications in according hospitality to popular discussions of Jewish theology. In this fashion the movement has fostered and disseminated much of the vigorous and fruitful thinking in this field in recent years.

The synagogue service represents still another area of Reconstructionist effort. The broad principles of the Reconstructionist approach to worship, stated in *Judaism as a Civilization,* restated in detail in *Toward a Guide for Jewish Ritual Usage,* need not be recapitulated here. In the last analysis, they are reducible to two enterprises: the modification of the traditional text so as to eliminate or recast its unacceptable elements, and the creation of new media for Jewish spirituality.

The first publication along these lines is the *Shir Hadash.* A supplement to High Holyday worship, it seeks to articulate in modern idiom and with pointed relevance to the contemporary scene, the age-old motifs of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur liturgies. If the response to it of one congregation, my own, can be taken as a criterion, this text answers a deep and widely experienced need.

The New Haggadah represents an even bolder and more comprehensive enterprise. For, whereas the *Shir Hadash* supplements the traditional text without, however, impinging on it, the Haggadah essays both. In it there have been deleted those passages over which Jews are likely to feel embarrassment, intellectual, ethical, or aesthetic. Rabbinic homilies and *piyyut* not especially meaningful or gracious are supplanted by better instances of Rabbinic thought and Jewish poesy. The whole has been enriched with fresh materials bringing the eternal message of Passover to bear on our times.

The largest undertaking under Reconstructionist auspices along the lines of new worship materials is the Sabbath Prayer Book now on the press. There can be little point in discussing now an as yet unpublished volume. Suffice it for the present to say that the Sabbath Prayer Book represents a consistent embodiment of the principles of worship as laid down in the "Guide." All who have worked over or observed the volume in the process of its preparation entertain the highest hopes of the contribution it is destined to make to Jewish religious life.

Nor does this list exhaust the Reconstructionist projects now afoot on behalf of Jewish worship and observance. Beyond the Sabbath Prayer Book looms a *Mahzor* for the *Shalosh Regalim.* A virtually complete manuscript of home exercises, readings, and hymns for the Sabbath table awaits final editing before publication. When it appears, every Jewish household will have at its disposal forms of worship, stories, poems, and songs arranged for each Sabbath in the Jewish calendar. Last of all, there exists, in well advanced condition, a volume of home observances covering every contingency in life from birth to *Minyan* services in the house of mourning.

Reconstructionism at the End of a Decade

In the light of all this, it may not be inapposite to note that the Reconstructionist movement has proved to be larger, so to speak, than its own size, more momentous even than the quite impressive accomplishments we have just reviewed. Operating on a beggarly budget and with a handful of workers, it has given quiet but potent support to the faith that American Jewry need not be sterile and uncreative; that it can, if it will, be equal to both the glory of the Jewish past and

the potentialities of the present. In this manner, Reconstructionism constitutes, in effect, a challenge to other parties in American Israel, a clear invitation to them to demonstrate what they, with their larger resources in funds and manpower, can accomplish. For the bitterest enemies of Reconstructionism, let alone its friends, cannot but see in it a precedent of what can be achieved Jewishly where will and vision are present.

Last of all, one old, shabby, but stubborn misconception is dissipated by our summary of Reconstructionist attainments in the realm of religion. It has long been a stock charge leveled against Reconstructionists that they are secularists. Here is the record for all to read. Before it, any devoted Jew at all capable of objectivity must say: If these be secularists, *ken yirbu beyisrael*—may there be more of them in Israel.

Shall We Retain the Doctrine of Israel as the Chosen People?

By MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

UNLIKE those tendencies of our times which consider ideas to be mere by-products of the play of blind social and economic forces, and which regard all reason as a mere rationalization of instinctive passions and desires, Reconstructionism holds clear thinking to be indispensable to a satisfactory adjustment to the conditions of life. The first ten years of its existence as a movement have been mainly devoted to clarifying and disseminating the principles which must guide us, if we are to save Judaism from its present chaos and give it structural form and functional purpose.

Reconstructionism endeavors to overcome that power of inertia which insists on thinking about Jewish life in terms of a thought-world entirely alien to the modern spirit. Between our universe of discourse and that in which our fathers before the Emancipation lived, there is as much difference as between the modern mind-picture of the physical universe and the ancient mind-picture before Copernicus proved that the earth moves around the sun. Just as, in ancient times, men thought that the earth was the center of the universe, and that their own homes, being equidistant on all sides from the horizon, were the center of the earth, so our fathers, in pre-modern times, regarded the drama of human life as exhausting the whole meaning of creation, and the Jewish people as the hero in that drama, with all the other nations merely a supporting cast.

The idea of Israel as the Chosen People must therefore be understood as belonging to a thought-world which we no longer inhabit. It fits in with a set of ideas that were congruous and rational enough in their day but that can no longer help us to understand human relations, or to orient ourselves to actual conditions as they are today. That is why I consider the omission of references to Israel as the Chosen People in *The New Haggadah* and in the forthcoming *Sabbath Prayer* Book to be one of the outstanding achievements of Reconstructionism. In these texts, such references have been replaced by affirmations of Israel's vocation and self-dedication to God's service. Those affirmations transpose into terms that are congruous with the thought-world of our age the valid core of the otherwise untenable traditional doctrine of the choice of Israel. Because the need and purpose of this change are still real-

ized by but few among us, a discussion of them is in order.

What the Choice of Israel Meant in the Past

The Bible goes out of its way to deflate all delusions of grandeur that the assumption of being God's chosen people might arouse. "Not because you were greater than any other people," says the Deuteronomist, "did the Lord set his heart on you and choose you—for you were the smallest of all peoples." Long before him, the prophet Amos spoke in an even more humbling vein, when he said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your wrongdoing." We know by now that the assumption of being God's chosen people was at first merely a way of expressing Israel's self-awareness as a distinct and unique people. That mode of expression is common to virtually all primitive and ancient peoples. In the Bible, the assumption of Israel's election merely implies that YHWH, the God whom Israel acknowledged as its god, was so incomparably greater than the gods of the other nations, that Israel might well consider itself fortunate in being His people. That belief took on even a deeper significance after the Babylonian exile. From that time on it meant that the Jews were convinced that they alone were in possession of the Torah which contained all that a people needed to live by in order to achieve wellbeing and perfection. Regarded as having been dictated by God, the Torah conferred upon the people that accepted it, the title of "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Throughout the period of the Second Commonwealth, the accent, in the doctrine of election was not on national self-awareness as such, but on being the most privileged of all peoples by virtue of having God's Torah.

This accent was reenforced throughout the Christian centuries, as a result of the support it gave the Jews in their struggle for existence. With the destruction of the Jewish State and the forced dispersion of the Jews among the other nations, that struggle became embittered. No less intense than the physical war waged against the Jew was the "war of nerves." It consisted then, as now, of unrelenting defamation. By the time the Christian Church was firmly established and its doctrine fairly crystallized, that defamation had acquired a definite pattern, which was calculated to make it extremely effective. The pattern consisted in basing the defamation on the very conception of God which the Jews had evolved, and on the very Scriptures which the Jews themselves regarded as the word of God. Their very doctrine of election was used as a weapon against them. Christianity, both authoritative and sectarian, went far beyond Judaism in the utilization of the doctrine of election to affirm the divine prerogative of the Church. That doctrine became its very *raison d'etre.* It set itself the task of realigning mankind into the chosen and the damned. The criterion was faith in Jesus as the Son of God and as identical with God. The objective was the establishment of a Church that was to supersede all human governments. In this process, the Jewish people was singled out as the people which, having at one time been the elect of God, repudiated Him and thereby became a people accursed and damned.

In the face of this ruthless attack on its reputation, there was little else for the Jewish people to do but so to elaborate its traditional claims to superiority as to counter effectively the claim to superiority advanced by the Church. With the interest of Western mankind during the pre-modern Christian centuries focused on the question of salvation and of eligibility for it, all of its thinking

was cast in the mold of the doctrine of divine election. All of creation was regarded as having come into being for the sake of those who were worthy of being God's chosen. The company of the elect, by reason of their kinship with God, wielded a power not vouchsafed to ordinary mortals. Not only could they vanquish death, but even in this life they exercised, especially in their collective capacity as the divine *ecclesia,* an influence over the very course of nature. Thus did the doctrine of election, to whomever applied or by whomever used, connote two specific ideas: one, that of cosmic centricity; the other, that of mystical or supernatural power.

Both of these ideas became integral to the conception of the Church. The Church regarded itself as the Israel of the New Covenant and as the heir of the Israel of the Old Covenant. The Church, moreover, viewed itself as a "fellowship with divine gifts," to use the technical phrase of Christian theology. Whether in direct response to the challenge of the Church, or as a spontaneous reaction to claims which began to be voiced by various religious sects during the first centuries of the Christian era, the Jews likewise advanced the claims of cosmic centricity and mystic and supernatural power for their own people, which henceforth was designated not only *"ummah"* or nation, but also *"keneset,"* or ecclesia, the exact analogue of Church.

Throughout rabbinic writings, the Israel-centered conception of the cosmos and of human history is the theme of a vast manifold of aggadic similes. The following is typical: "The straw, the stubble and the chaff were disputing with one another. Each one said, 'For my sake was the field sown.' Said the wheat, Wait until you get to the threshing floor, then we shall know for whose sake the field was sown.' Then they arrived at the threshing floor and the owner winnowed the grain; the chaff was scattered in the wind, the straw was left on the ground, and the stubble was burned. The wheat, however, was taken carefully and piled up into a heap, and whoever passed by fondled it with admiration. Likewise do all the nations contend among themselves, each claiming, 'The world was created for my sake.' But Israel retorts, 'Wait until the day of reckoning comes, then we shall know for whom the world was created.'" Moreover, the sages ascribed to Israel the possession of supernatural power. According to R. Eliezer ben R. Jose, the Galilean, "God said to the Angel of Death: 'Although I have given you power over every one of My creatures, you can have no power over this nation (Israel).'" Time and again we come across statements which express the apotheosis of Israel. Israel is said to be a people transfigured and deathless, occupying a rank equal to that of angels or "holy princes." This implies that the ecclesia of Israel possesses the status of an entity that transcends the laws of nature.

The Effort to Reinterpret the Choice of Israel

Emancipation has undermined the status of the Jews as a nation. Enlightenment or rationalism has undermined the status of Jews as a *keneset* or an *ecclesia.* The traditional basis for the belief that Israel was God's Chosen People was the assumption that the miraculous events recorded in the Torah concerning the Patriarchs and their descendants in Egypt represented factual truth. By far the most significant of those miraculous events was God's self-revelation to Israel on Mount Sinai. It was as unthinkable to question the truth of those events as to question the reality of one's own body. Under those circumstances Jews could not possibly regard themselves as other

than the most privileged of all peoples. Those circumstances, however, no longer obtain with the majority of modern-minded men and women. The modern-minded Jew cannot consider the miraculous events recorded in the Torah and in the rest of the Bible as other than legendary. He therefore cannot accept them as evidence of the traditional Jewish doctrine that Israel is God's Chosen People. The attempt to supply other evidence is itself a departure from tradition. Such an attempt is justified, provided the new evidence is convincing. But is it convincing?

Unable to accept literally the traditional version of the doctrine of the chosen people, the religious wing of the early Maskilim, the first Reformers and the middle group who designated themselves as the Historical School reinterpreted that doctrine to mean one or all of the following propositions, which are set forth in Kohler's "Jewish Theology," as justifying the claim of the Jews to being a chosen people:

1. Jews possess hereditary traits which qualify them to be superior to the rest of the world in the realm of the spiritual, the religious and the ethical.

2. Their ancestors were the first to achieve those religious and ethical conceptions and ideals which will, in the end, become the common possession of mankind and help to achieve salvation.

3. Jews possess the truest form of the religious and ethical ideals of mankind.

4. Jews are entrusted with the task of communicating those ideals to the rest of the world.

What Is Wrong With the Reinterpretation

First, the proposition that Jews possess unusual hereditary traits which entitle them to be God's elect is based on a series of unproved generalizations with regard to certain qualities being characteristic only of Jews, and on biological assumptions concerning heredity, which are entirely unwarranted. It is one thing for an ancient sage to express his love for his people by describing them as unique in the possession of the traits of chastity, benevolence, and humaneness; but it is quite another thing for a modern person seriously to assert that because Jewish life has manifested these traits, Jews alone are inherently qualified to grasp and promulgate the truth of religion. We expect of the modern person a greater regard for objective fact than is evidenced in the sweeping statements about hereditary Jewish traits.

If Jews were to adopt the foregoing reinterpretation of the doctrine of election, they would, by implication, give their assent to the most pernicious theory of racial heredity which has been advanced to justify racial inequality and the dominance of the master race. Historical conditions, as well as geographic environment and social institutions, are greater determinants of national traits than heredity. Moreover, to represent divine election merely as confirming naturally inherited traits is to identify it virtually with natural selection. It is but one step from such identification to the identification of God with the process by which the physically weak are weeded out. We know all too well from current experience how such a conception of God is only another name for the apotheosis of the will to power.

Secondly, for Jews to claim sole credit for having given mankind those religious and ethical conceptions which hold out the promise of a better world smacks of arrogance. The Greek philosophers, the Stoics in the Roman period, the humanists of the Renaissance and the nationalists of the 18th century have made indispensable contributions to spiritual and moral truth. Even if Jews were the first to have enunciated the great teachings,

it is immodest for them to boast about it. That would not make them better or superior to the rest of the world, in any sense whatever. The first-born has no right to claim that he is better or more beloved than the other children. No special privileges any longer attach to primogeniture.

Thirdly, to maintain that Jews possess the truest form of truth would be understandable, if Jews believed that the teachings of their religion are immutable and infallible. However, with a dynamic conception of Jewish belief and practice, the only meaning to that claim can be that Jews have always managed to be a bit ahead of every new development of spiritual truth. Hardly any one who knows how far some of our greatest Jewish spiritual leaders were, at times, behind the best thinkers of their day, though we cannot hold it against them, can subscribe to this reinterpretation. Spinoza, who truly did forge ahead of his contemporaries, was excommunicated.

The very assumption of a predetermined and permanent superiority, no matter in what respect, does not lend itself to reinterpretation. Our purpose in reinterpretating traditional values should be to retain and emphasize those elements in them which are compatible with our own highest ethical standards. Among these ethical standards to which any traditional value must necessarily conform if it is to continue functioning in our lives, is that of democracy. I refer, of course, not merely to political forms of democracy, but to that conception of human worth and individual dignity which regards any classification of human beings into superior and inferior as immoral. This does not mean that we must shut our eyes to the fact that human beings are unequal in their gifts and attainments. What it means is that we should not assume *a priori* that any particular race, group or people is endowed, by nature, or by God, with any gift which entitles it to regard itself, *ipso facto,* as superior. By no kind of dialectics is it possible to remove the odium of comparison from any reinterpretation of an idea which makes invidious distinctions between one people and another.

Finally, the fourth proposition confuses the doctrine of Israel's election, as expressed in the overwhelming majority of biblical allusions dealing with Israel's relation to God, with the doctrine of Israel's mission which is the subject of less than a dozen passages in the second part of Isaiah. There is not the slightest implication in the multitude of references to Israel as a chosen people that it is expected to fulfill the mission of making God known to the nations.

As for the few unmistakable allusions to the mission of Israel, the manner in which the mission is to be discharged has very little in common with what we usually associate with missionary activity, or even with exemplary conduct. The light which Israel is to be unto the nations is pictured by the prophet as radiating from Israel's brilliant career as a nation in its own land, dispensing justice and maintaining peace in the name of its God. The establishment of the ideal kingdom of God in the land of Israel is what the prophet hoped would lead the rulers of the world and their nations to acknowledge the God of Israel as sovereign.

Belief in the Choice of Israel Not Necessary for Survival

The question which comes to mind at this point is the following: Since the proponents of the foregoing reinterpretations of the doctrine of the chosen people no longer believed in the factual truth of the patriarchal stories, or of the miracles and the Sinaitic theophany, why were they at such pains to interpret that doctrine? It cannot be that the reason

for their insistence upon retaining the doctrine of Israel's election is that it permeates the whole of Jewish tradition. Might not the same be said of the traditional doctrine of the divine authorship of the Torah? There surely is not a single syllable or letter of the Jewish tradition which is not thoroughly saturated with the idea that the whole of the Pentateuch was dictated by God to Moses. Yet these men have managed to emancipate themselves from that assumption. What then prompts them so to resist any tampering with the doctrine of Israel's election?

The only reasonable motive to which such zeal can be ascribed is not one which derives from the momentum of tradition, but from the considerations of Jewish survival. They seem to think that Jews would give up their struggle to exist as an identifiable group, unless they were to believe that they are endowed, individually or as a group, biologically or culturally, with some moral or spiritual preeminence over the rest of the world.

In reply, be it said that the very attempt to bolster up the Jewish will to live by reasons or assumptions of questionable validity not only defeats its own purpose, but is injurious from the standpoint of Jewish self-respect. The Jewish will to live cannot be fortified by spurious means. Any claim to moral or spiritual superiority or preeminence of any kind that is not based on incontrovertible proof, either supernatural, or natural, is spurious and unworthy even of ordinary morals, to say nothing of high spiritual attainment.

Judaism can certainly not afford to harbor any doctrine which is in conflict with the ethical basis of democracy. That basis is the intrinsic worth of the individual human soul, a worth which is independent of the people, race or church to which one belongs. This implies that no people, race or church can confer upon its members a higher human status than does any other. Democracy as such calls for the treatment of individuals, despite their marked differences, as equals from the standpoint of law and of their right to happiness and salvation. Ethical democracy goes one step further and calls for the treatment of all peoples, races and churches as equals in all respects. Indeed, societies are far more alike one another in their characteristics and behavior than are individuals. Hence discrimination between one people and another is even more irrational and unethical than between one individual and another.

Continuity of the Jewish consciousness demands that as large a number as possible of traditional Jewish values be retained. This does not mean, however, that all traditional values must necessarily be retained. Some are inherently of such a character as not to be capable of reinterpretation, i. e. of being fitted into the pattern of the present-day outlook on life. Not even the fact that they suffuse the entire tradition, and that their elimination must produce a radically altered tradition, should be sufficient to save them. Take, for example, the traditional beliefs concerning the restoration of the Temple with its sacrificial worship, or concerning the status of Jews in the diaspora as exiles. These beliefs are an integral part of Jewish tradition. But life is stronger than tradition. The Jewish will to live has managed to survive the desuetude of these beliefs. Why then should we assume that the Jewish will to live would be weakened, if we were to eliminate one more belief which runs counter to the movement of the human spirit at its best?

Belief in Choice of Israel a Source of Maladjustment

Far from being a factor for Jewish survival, the doctrine of Israel's election

is henceforth bound to be ideologically a definite hindrance. In its traditional form, that doctrine belongs to the same universe of discourse as the one in which God was conceived as a magnified human being, sitting on a great throne in the heavens, surrounded by hosts of angels and demons who are at His beck and call, ready to carry out His will on earth. It belongs to the universe of discourse in which the supernatural miracles believed to have taken place in the past were a guarantee of like miracles in the future. In that thought-world, the divine sound of the shofar on Sinai was an assurance of the shofar of the Messiah at the end of days. It is part of a world-outlook in which all human suffering, even the fact of death, was attributed to sin, in which animal sacrifice was accepted as an indispensable means of atoning for sin, and in which a whole people could be conceived as subjected to unceasing torment of body and mind for centuries, because of failures to atone for some anonymous ancestral sin. To get back to that pre-modern universe of discourse is possible for the modern man only in the same sense as it is possible to revisit the scene of one's childhood. People do that sort of thing to satisfy a feeling of nostalgia, but not with a view to finding a permanent home.

If the Jewish people is to have a future, it must so reconstruct its ideology concerning mankind, the Universe and God, that it may feel itself perfectly at home in the universe of discourse in which those who are most advanced intellectually, morally and spiritually dwell at present. There religion is not based on the tradition of miraculous events and theophanies supposed to have taken place in ancient times. It is based rather on the fundamental fact that all normal human beings are endowed with a capacity for salvation, provided that, individually and collectively, they coordinate their conduct and their institutions with the functions of God as the Power within and without them that makes for salvation. That conception of religion points to a better world in which Jews, without giving up their historical uniqueness and continuity as a people, want to have a share. In that better world the orchestration of human life is not to serve merely as an accompaniment to any one nation or ecclesia playing solo.

A far nobler motive for Jewish survival than the assertion of a claim to spiritual superiority is the need for a people always to strive to outdo itself, always to keep on growing in moral and spiritual capacity. There can be no better evidence of such growth than the surrender of notions and beliefs which may have served a useful purpose in a people's childhood or youth, but which have become outdated when that people has attained maturity. Retaining a doctrine like the election of Israel, which is so out of harmony with the modern world-outlook, is bound to produce maladjustment in the Jew and to stunt the growth of Judaism. This becomes evident, when we consider the actual effect which the retention of the doctrine has on either of the two predominant types of people, the rational and the romantic.

The Effect on Rationalists and Romanticists

The rational type of Jew insists on clear and distinct thought in religion. This does not mean that he will not admit into religion anything but that which is scientifically demonstrable, or that he has no feelings, or that he is averse to mysticism. All it means is that, in religion as in everything else, we must not say what we do not mean. The rational type of Jew knows very

well that in religion symbols and metaphors are indispensable, and that we cannot always articulate what they imply. But while it is true that we cannot always say what we mean, we definitely should not say what we do not mean. The fact that we Jews have not paid sufficient regard to this simple ethical principle is probably responsible for our having alienated from Judaism some of the most worthwhile men and women.

A striking illustration of the harm done by failing to reckon with the rational type of Jew is what Felix Adler says about himself in his "An Ethical Philosophy of Life." He there states that, when he was a young man, he was urged to enter the rabbinate, though he held views which he could not openly avow to his congregation. He was told that, by pretending to fall in with the views of people, he would ultimately get them to accept his own. "Would this be fair to them, or to myself?" he inquires, "Was I to act a lie in order to teach the truth? There was especially one passage in the Sabbath service which brought me to the point of resolution. I mean the words spoken by the officiating minister as he holds up the Pentateuch scrolls, 'And this is the law which Moses set before the People of Israel.' I had lately returned from abroad where I had had a fairly thorough course in biblical exegesis, and had become convinced that the Mosaic religion is, so to speak, a religious mosaic, and that there is hardly a single stone in it which can with certainty be traced to the authorship of Moses. Was I to repeat these words? It was impossible. I was certain that they would stick in my throat. On these grounds, the separation was decided on by me, and became irremediable." Felix Adler was by no means alone in this insistence on absolute sincerity in religion. We shall never know precisely how many of our most brilliant minds have been kept out of the rabbinate, because we have made of intellectual honesty a prohibitive luxury. Their number is undoubtedly legion.

The effect of the retention of the doctrine of election on the romantic type of Jew, though of an entirely different character, is not less detrimental to Jewish survival. The romantic type of Jew deprecates all insistence on taking literally matters of ritual and liturgy. They are not intended, according to him, to convey exact truth, but to arouse the religious emotions. That purpose, he contends, is defeated by all attempts to pray in terms of our own universe of discourse. Take, as an illustration, the traditional prayer for the Sabbath, which reads: "In Thy love and favor, O Lord our God, let us inherit Thy holy Sabbath." The version in the Union Prayer Book reads: "O help us to preserve the Sabbath as Israel's heritage from generation to generation." This version may sound prosaic; yet, in omitting the reference to God's favor and in alluding to the difficulty the Jew experiences in keeping the Sabbath in a non-Jewish environment, the modern version strikes a truer note theologically, and a more needed one socially. One may well suspect the romanticist of being so fond of tradition and poetry as to sacrifice his people for their sake.

The romantic policy of "Hands off!" from anything, however obsolete, that is sanctified by tradition is sure to paralyze all spiritual initiative. This is just what has happened with the doctrine of Israel's election. The romantic fondness for it has acted on the Jewish consciousness as an opiate. It has lulled the Jew into a state of dangerous complacency. It has prevented the Jewish mind from applying itself seriously and with all its might to the task of reformulating the place of Israel among the nations. So long as the Jew takes it for granted that

he belongs to a people that is divinely chosen, he can see no need for canvassing the problem of the political and religious status of the Jewish people.

"Vocation" vs. "Election"

Jewish survival depends entirely upon our achieving a moral realism which, on the one hand, will wean us away from futile compensatory mechanism of imagined superiority, and, on the other, will enable us to find the basis for intrinsic worth of Jewish life in the daily round of contemporary living. The only kind of Jewish survival that would constitute a creative adjustment to the world as it is today is one in which the two elements of our tradition would continue to function, viz., Jewish peoplehood and Jewish religion. But what peoplehood and religion represent today must be stated in different terms from those which were current in the past. The essence of Jewish peoplehood can no longer be identified either with political unity or with religious uniformity. Political unity will have to be confined to Jews living in their homeland. Uniformity will have to be cultural rather than religious. Likewise, the essence of Jewish religion can no longer be regarded as dependent upon the factual truth of the supernatural events which are recorded in the Torah and on the logical conclusion that they prove the election of Israel. Jewish religion will have to be based on what objective study has shown to be the function of a religion in the life of a people. That function is so to inspire and direct the energies of a people as to help its individual men and women to achieve salvation or to make the most of their lives.

The place previously occupied in the Jewish consciousness by the doctrine of election will have to be taken by the doctrine of vocation. The theological use of the idea "vocation" is one met with in Christianity, especially in Protestant teaching. But, as a matter of fact, the idea of vocation is no less Jewish than it is Christian. Thus we find in the Talmud (Berakot 17a) "A familiar saying in the mouth of the Sages of Yabneh was this: 'I (who study the law) am a creature (of God) and my fellow man is a creature (of God); my work is in the city, his in the field; I rise early to my work, he rises early to his. Just as he cannot excel in my work, so I cannot excel in his. Perhaps thou wilt say: I do much and he does little (for the Torah). But we have learned, 'He who offers much and he who offers little are equal, provided that each direct his heart to heaven.'" Judaism should extend the significance of vocation to include nations as well as individuals. *No nation is chosen or elected or superior to any other, but every nation should discover its vocation or calling, as a source of religious experience and as a medium of salvation to its individual men and women.*

It has been suggested that an individual may experience the presence of God in his life and have a sense of a divine calling, if he is engaged in doing needful work, if that work calls into play his best powers and makes for their development, and, finally, if it enables him to contribute his share to the world's work and common life. If Jews throughout the world would reckon in their various collective efforts with these three principles of vocation, they would experience a religious revival which would be tantamount to divine revelation. For the Jews as a people to be engaged in needful work at the present time means for them to accept the following threefold task:

1. Fostering creative thought dealing with the social, the economic, the political and the religious problems of Jewish life in Palestine and in the Diaspora.

This implies education not merely in matters of the past but also in matters of the present.

2. The organization of communal life on such a basis as to call for participation of every Jew, lay or professional, in some Jewish activity.

3. Encouragement of aesthetic creativity in all the arts, with a view to giving aesthetic articulation to the range of emotions from those evoked by the most commonplace aspects of Jewish life to those evoked by the most sublime experiences in Jewish religion.

If this vocation is to be accepted by Jews, we shall then no longer need to have our morale bolstered up by such a spiritual anachronism as extolling God "for not having made us like the other nations." Instead, we shall find our calling as a people so absorbing, so satisfying and so thrilling that we shall have every reason in the world to thank God for having manifested His love to us, as He does to all men and nations who have found their true vocation, and for having rendered us worthy to be identified with His great and holy name.

Social Ideals and Ethics for the Jew of Our Time

By JACOB J. WEINSTEIN

ENLIGHTENED self-interest should prompt us Jews to labor in the cause of democracy since no other climate is congenial to us. A decent regard for all that we have contributed toward the democratic ideal and practice should also prompt us to keep democracy alive for our children.

Social Idealism in the Bible

A persistent, brilliant humanistic thread runs through the whole of our Biblical tradition — a tradition which became the moral sanction for the democratic innovations of our American republic. The worship of God is dependent on the existence of man. Man is not expendable in God's universe. The divine reputation is at stake in the working out of human freedom. In his dialogue with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham insists that God's justice be at least equal to that of man. The story of the Ten Plagues is not intended primarily to demonstrate the virtuosity of God in salvation; rather is its purpose to press home the point that there is no hope in kings and princes.

The first of the Ten Commandments establishes God's right to reverence on the proposition that He redeemed the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The Mosaic legislation is designed to protect man from yokes imposed from without and from tyrannies and corruptions from within. The boring, with an awl, of the ear of the man who refused manumission because of love of his master was Israel's mark of contempt for any man who despised freedom. The Jubilee legislation which returned land to its original owners every 50 years was but the most radical expression of a deep folk sentiment that freedom was best buttressed by economic security — that freedom is "liberty plus groceries."

Every great tradition has its apostrophes to freedom and its songs of liberty, but our Hebraic tradition is unique in having a type of human being utterly and passionately devoted to the purifying and

protecting of freedom — the prophets. The prophets of Israel were the guardians of a desert-born tradition of equality and were so jealous of God's priority in the affections of man as to become completely allergic to human authority. They became the self-appointed censors of kings, priests and princes and were, in fact, the collective conscience of the community. Whenever the people, out of fear or sloth or weakness, gave to man the reverence and obedience belonging rightly to God, the prophets came to goad them on to reassert their human dignity. The prophets were single-tracked fanatical geniuses, self-sacrificingly devoted to the task of fanning the flame of freedom in the damp souls of depressed, exploited human beings.

Post-Biblical Jewry's Contribution to Democracy

The Western world has been fairly well aware of the biblical contribution to the struggle for democratic living. But the Western world is not nearly enough cognizant of the post-Biblical contribution of the Jews to the development of the democratic process. Here the contribution was not so much in the realm of ideology as in the realm of experience. Here the emphasis was on implementing the ideals so perfectly expressed by the prophets.

The fact that this implementation took place in semi-tolerated ghetto communities and not in a large free nation-state appears now to have many advantages for us. The intimate scale of the experience enables us to apply its lessons on the most local levels. The lack of state authority and police power gives us a real idea of the possibilities of voluntary association and cooperation — a basic pattern of the democratic way of life. The fact that Jewish communities could have regulated the lives of their members without overt police power proves that people can be held together by loyalty to common objectives and common ideals. If we can use the facts of modern science and the lessons of the last hundred years of world history as effectively as Jewish leadership used the Torah tradition and the lessons of Jewish history, there is a good prospect that we may achieve a world community.

The most important end result of the post-biblical experience of the Jews was the integration of the individual and the community. In the best and profoundest sense of that term, it was a sublimation of individual into communal aims. The individual lost something of that rugged and romantic independence of the desert. The Rechabite, the Samson, the Absalom spirit was never fully at home in Israel. Defiant egotists, like the false Messiahs, had their following indeed, but they were invariably extruded from the normal life of the Jewish community. The Jew was taught that he derived all his significance from God and the community. Separating oneself from the community was considered as irreligious as denying God for in both instances one was disloyal to the sources of his being.

These teachings were enfleshed by constant practice in social responsibility. The minute regulations for the care of the orphans and widows, for the dowering of brides, the ransoming of captives, the education of the young, the care of the needy, the sick and the aged made each man his brother's keeper. Considering that the Jew had little or no control over the major economic and political conditions of his life, he developed a set of institutions and directives which achieved as close an approximation to the shared life as was possible within the framework of a capitalist economy and feudal political structure.

The Jew has succeeded in extending the vertical family virtues and loyalties horizontally without falling into the undifferentiated equalitarianism of the pri-

mitive commune. In addition to the achievement of an orderly society without police power and of a functioning integration of the individual and the community, the Jewish post-biblical experience produced two other precious end-products. One was the supreme importance of education as the medium of social control. Since study was a form of worship, and knowledge an indispensable counterpart of piety, every man was educable and every man was obligated to pursue learning. The Talmudic discipline may not have been scientifically geared to the absorptive capacity of the learner, but it made demands on the mind. It forced every man's mental muscles to stretch. It operated on the premise that, given time and willingness, each and every man could master detailed and complex bodies of knowledge and develop the capacity to analyze, select and correlate specific facts.

Mature living, even in a pre-industrial society, cannot be simple and the Jewish educational discipline was designed to enable every member of the community to make the necessary choices and develop the necessary habits and skills to live a personally satisfying and socially responsible existence in a democratic community governed by law. Hillel summarized that law in the shrewd admonition: "That which is hateful to thee do not to thy neighbor" but he added: "the rest is commentary—*go and learn it.*" The destruction of tyrants is but the excavator's task. The building of the house of democracy will truly begin only when each citizen disciplines himself with enough knowledge to make intelligent choices.

The second by-product which we can harvest from the long and varied experience of Israel is psychological. It is a feeling for the proper tempo of social change. As a minority generally placed in the areas where the impact of change was most severely felt, the Jewish people bore the many scars of violent disruption. In the long perspective of its life among the nations, quiet and gradual changes often proved more fundamentally radical than more violent ones. The seminal influences of the Renaissance and the Reformation were seen to have been infinitely more productive of wholesome growth than the Crusades and the Thirty Years' War. On Israel's palimpsest chronicle the invention of the steam engine was a profoundly greater revolutionary influence than all of Napoleon's life-spending wars. This knowledge confirmed the organismic pattern of change already set in the Torah tradition — a pattern very much like our American constitutional mode of change. By this pattern society moves from the old to the new, from the known to the unknown with the care of a surgeon grafting skin from one part of the body to another. The skin is moved gradually, by stages, to the new position so that connection with the blood stream will not be lost, the removed skin will become better acclimated to its new location and the patient will suffer a minimum of shock. We shall, indeed, need blueprints of the cooperative commonwealth of the future, but equally important will be the know-how of moving the vast social body with its inherited predispositions and vested interests from that which is to that which ought to be. This *know-how* gleams from every page of our long and lusty record.

We do not mean to leave the impression that the Jewish synthesis of the one and the many, of order and freedom has always been perfect. To preserve the community, the legitimate rights of the individual were sometimes sacrificed. We cannot forget the persecution of the followers of Maimonides and the excommunication of Spinoza. To preserve the family and prevent loose sexual practices, romantic love as the Western world

knew it was discouraged. Love became an after-marriage plant and all too often was absent from the households of Israel. The emphasis on reason and intelligence, while it guarded the people from the maudlin emotionalism of vulgar mysticism, also discouraged poetic mystical experience and led, at times, to an academic word-splitting formalism — a formalism which, in turn, provoked the Hasidic schism. Vestiges of that same formalism in our day still alienate many Jews who seek in their religion a warm emotional uplift, an ecstatic spiritual experience.

Nevertheless, the cost of these excesses of virtue was little enough to pay not only for the preservation of the people and their ideals but for that *élan* which held the vast majority of them to the conviction that the struggle was eminently worthwhile. But what is more important for us is the fact that these same emphases are what the world needs so badly in its present plight. If we are not to suffer from rugged individualism within the nation and from rampant chauvinism among the nations, we must learn to convert the passion for personal rights and privileges, so generously encouraged by the open frontier, into the sense of social responsibility and community mindedness. Just as the awareness of a hostile gentile majority evoked and confirmed the mutual aid factors in the Jewish tradition, so must the knowledge of the catastrophic consequences of irresponsible action on a tightly inter-twined globe bring to the fore the altruistic impulses, the cooperative forms and the collectivist sanctions of our Western civilization.

The urgent needs of our time and the dominant imperatives of our tradition conspire, therefore, to obligate us to do more than others to implement the democratic ideals of America and, through America, the democratic hopes of the world. We say *implement* advisedly. We have had enough of lip service, of those who accept the principle but shy at the specific application, of those who believe that the ideal is fine *but* impractical, at least "for our time." What concretely can the average Jew do to make democracy work?

Democracy in Politics

First of all, he can take an active interest in his local government. This is the most neglected aspect of our American politics. The local governments are the training ground for our national leaders. There is no magic by which an inefficient or dishonest mayor can become a good governor or a competent congressman. The political health of America must be built from the ground up. We begin at the grass roots.

Test yourself with these simple questions: Do you know your precinct boundaries? Do you know its political complexion? Are you acquainted with the key men of both parties who live in it? Have you discussed their community ideals or political objectives with them? Do you know the ward committeemen? They are often more powerful than the aldermen or councilmen. Do you know how they are selected and how they get their names on the ballot? What do you know about the election laws and the election procedures? Our government is a government of laws and men and parties, *especially parties.* You cannot leave the parties to the men in the smoke-filled rooms and expect good government. Even at the primaries your vote, all too often, merely helps to choose the least of two or three evils. You must show your interest at the ward level and learn how to put a worthy person's name on the ballot by petition if the regular party channels refuse to support him. One of the most essential services you can perform for democracy is to enlist the best

men and women in the community to run for office — for councilmen, school board trustees, police commissioners, civil service commissioners, park commissioners and public welfare commissioners.

What is true of local government is certainly equally true of our national government. It is neither fair nor wise to elect a president on the basis of his platform and then vote for representatives and senators who are committed to opposite objectives. This is the kind of check and balance that merely cancels out the chance for effective government. We have had the example during the last twelve years of seeing the social objectives of the New Deal slowly compromised to death by reactionary congressmen. We have forced the President into a position where he has become the prisoner of a coalition of provincial senators, metropolitan machine politicians and die-hard isolationists; where, in order to pursue the war with vigor, he has had to whittle down radically the democratic gains of the last ten years on the national scene. The powerful pressure groups are on the scene in season and out winning susceptible men to their special interests. Only the constant vigilance of the public can counteract their influence.

Civil Liberties

The second area of constructive participation on the part of every Jew is the field of civil liberties. As the responsibilities of government increase in the carrying out of its duty to pursue the public welfare, its powers must increase and, as its powers increase, the dangers of the coercive and corrupt use of those powers likewise increase. It is all the more urgent, therefore, to preserve that private area circumscribed by the Bill of Rights upon which governmental coercion may not encroach. This is the citadel of the individual's privacy. In Justice Brandeis' phrase, it is "the right to be let alone." Within it, the individual must be protected *from* government *by* government in his rights of thinking, speaking, forming and giving opinions. This may appear as though we are taking back with the left hand what we are giving with the right. We ask for the increase of governmental powers and then warn the people to be ever vigilant against the abuse of those powers by the officials. There is no more contradiction in this than there is in building motor cars with reliable brakes.

Democracy in Group Relations

The third area of effective action for Jewish individuals and groups is the area of intercultural, inter-faith and interracial relations. It is significant that the last annual report of the American Civil Liberties Union recognizes "that the issue of race relations continues to occupy the first place in the struggle for civil liberties." The legal battles in our courts are important for their symbolic value and for the power of decisions to become binding precedents. But, all too often, the issues are decided before they come to court in that vast inchoate arena—public opinion. Just whom the policeman will arrest among a group of disturbers, how intensely the district attorney will prepare his case, what emphases the judge will select in his instruction to the jury, what points the jury will consider significant — all these depend on what Justice Holmes called "the inarticulate major premises" of one's life.

It is the business of public education at all levels and through every medium to get at these major premises and orientate them toward a full and easy tolerance of every legitimate difference of race, color and creed. We must be satisfied with this as a first step, remembering the almost instinctive dislike for the unlike. It may be the privilege of the next generation to mature this tolerance,

into an active appreciation of differences. America's rich diversity of cultures, colors and creeds is at once an opportunity and a danger; a danger because it affords aggressive men with mean ambitions fertile fields in which to sow seeds of discord and hate; an opportunity for our more enlightened educators and statesmen to weave these various cultural strains into a magnificently rich civilization. By thus giving color and depth to our national life they can demonstrate the possibility and the value of unity in diversity in a way that may inspire the nations to build more quickly and firmly a world federation of nations.

The war has presented us with the most promising opportunities for etching into the heart of America the consciousness that we are, indeed, a nation of nations. Every list of casualties, of men reported missing, of men and women cited for valor constitutes a biographical dictionary of an inter-racial, inter-creedal and inter-cultural content. The radio broadcast of the Italian-born mother welcoming her flying ace son, the Czech mother humbly responding to the presentation of a medal awarded posthumously to her son, the Jewish father devoting himself zealously to war bond drives to honor the memory of his bombardier son killed in action may be the most persuasive answers to the preachers of group discrimination and hatred.

We say they *may* be. They are not automatically so. They provide the raw material from which newspaper editors, radio commentators, scenario writers and dramatists can distill the antidote for the poison of racial prejudice. Artists in every medium are quickly grasping the high emotional and artistic appeal inherent in the facts of our cultural diversity—but their opportunities for expression are controlled by the owners of press, radio and cinema. These owners are not entirely immune to the public will. Every letter you write in commendation of a fine effort helps to enlarge the market for such works and ultimately to influence those "inarticulate major premises."

Democracy in Economic Life

The fourth area of urgent and long range activity for Jews (as indeed for all alert socially-conscious citizens) is in the field of transforming our so-called free enterprise private economy into a system viable enough to provide first the security and then the abundance which our material resources, machine tools and industrial skills can make possible. Only such an economy will sustain the cultural values and institutions necessary to make us free, decent, brotherly citizens. Philosophers as far apart in temperament as Karl Marx and Santayana agree that people who live differently think differently — that when the relations to the forces of production are such as to give one man more than he can possibly consume in a hundred lifetimes and another not enough to clothe and feed his family, a chasm develops which no religion, culture or nationality can effectively bridge. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." *Either we shall democratize our industry or industry will undemocratize our politics.* This is the primary challenge that faces the Western world after this war.

America has already taken bold steps to meet this challenge. These measures are somewhat vaguely and not too accurately grouped under the caption of the New Deal. Many, however, were initiated under Woodrow Wilson and, some, under Herbert Hoover. Their aim is to provide a greater degree of security for the ill-housed, the ill-clothed and the ill-fed and for those who must depend for a living on the work of their hands. Sponsored by a party which is itself an uneasy alliance of dissident elements and modified by the opposition party—also a conglo-

merate of different economic interests—these measures show all the temporizing and patchwork which must result from such a situation. They also have the advantage of being free from ideological cant and the pedantic formalism of dogmatic panaceas. Any attempt to tarbrush the New Deal measures with emotion-laden labels, such as "bureaucratic socialism" or "Russian communism," is an evidence of loose thinking or a desire deliberately to muddy the waters of public discussion.

Let us avoid explosive words and flag-waving symbols and concentrate on the real objective before us—the attainment of the largest measure of security for the greatest number of people within the nation. If this can be done by private enterprise, private enterprise will have its chance, since the folkways and thought patterns of the majority of Americans are definitely partial to capitalism. Harsh experience with recurrent depressions and the grievous dislocations of the period following the last war have brought about a fairly popular acceptance of government assistance and government regulation. The National Resources Planning Board appointed by the President has prepared an elaborate plan for the conversion of America to a peacetime economy. The plan calls for the extension of our Social Security program, a great back-log of public works, increase of medical and hospital facilities, a vast increase in educational facilities for youths and adults, more T.V.A.'s, Grand Coulee Dams and rural electrification projects and, above all, vast housing projects which will make decent living space available for many thousands of Americans.

This program and the program of rehabilitation for the ten million discharged soldiers will not be possible without heavy and perhaps burdensome taxes. Many will be called upon to sacrifice some of the earnings of their skill and enterprise in order that the general security and well-being might be furthered. There will be bitter resistence, we can be sure. Some will honestly fear that such a program will coddle the slothful and discourage the thrifty and ambitious, that it will eventually destroy the virtues which built the nation. Others will use this argument as mere specious rationalization to protect their vested interests in the status-quo. Big business will arouse the fears of little business and use the groceryman and the tailor to front the opposition.

It is at this point that we Jews may play a notable part in softening the resistance to social progress. We are well represented in the small trades and in the distributive branches of American industry. It is the middle class which will, most likely, hold the balance of power on the American political scene for the next two decades. In this strategic position we may help the middle class of America to see that its ultimate welfare depends on an economy that offers real security to the workers. Of course, this will require some sacrifice from the Jews. We shall be encouraging reforms whose cost will fall on that area of our economy where the Jew has been thickly placed by the peculiar twists of history. But these sacrifices will be minor indeed, compared to those which any kind of fascist state would impose upon us. The crystal-clear lesson of our time is that a country which does not follow the imperatives of its democratic postulates falls sooner or later into the power of the fascists.

Democracy and Nationalism

In building a cooperative economic society where the welfare of one is not gained at the expense of the happiness of another, we are at the same time laying the foundation of a healthy nationalism. Only such a nationalism can

create a lasting world order and a durable world peace, and only in such a world order can the Jewish people have security among the nations or see the mature development of a national homeland. In his brilliant analysis of Hans Kohn's monumental book, "The Idea of Nationalism," Max Lerner writes:

"As we look back at nationalism's history, with retrospective wisdom, we can lay our fingers on what it was that made nationalism inadequate. There was nothing in the nation idea, itself, to resolve the struggle within each people between the acquisitive and the fraternal, the capitalist and the democratic . . . we failed to organize our industrialism for human needs rather than for the market, so that we did not create a real *society.* And where there is no sense of society within a people, it is almost futile to hope that a transnational society can be created. There are many today who dream of a world community largely because it is easier to do that than face the difficult tasks of creating a genuine sense of community within the nation itself."

Shades of the prophets of Israel! They, too, placed the brotherly society above the nation. They, too, demanded loyalty to justice above loyalty to kings. They preferred to see the state destroyed and the nation in exile rather than see it reared on the bent backs of the people. Only nations with clean hands could ascend the mountain of the Lord and create the international brotherhood of peace. What the prophets taught was even more deeply burned into the soul of Israel in its long trek among the nations. And this heritage of teaching and experience today guides the pioneers in Palestine as they labor to build a national community on the firm foundation of economic justice. Thus we see how all lines of action converge. All good derives from a common source and flows into the common reservoir of humanity. *Whether we labor for a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine or for an effective world government our labors correlate with one another as long as we are mindful of the needs of the whole person, which is for a sense of belonging as well as for bread. Whether we begin at the periphery of world affairs and work toward the center of our Jewish existence or begin at the center of our Jewish life and work outward to a world in which that life can grow in dignity and freedom, we shall find ourselves with a community of interests. This is the essence of the social philosophy of Reconstructionism.*

The most integral Jewish person is, of course, the one who accepts the obligation toward both lines of action — purposeful, contributory Jewish life in a progressive American and world context. It will not be long before such a Jew discovers that the work in one direction supplements, intensifies and sanctions the work in the other direction, for the great tradition of America is in all important respects in harmony with the great traditions of Israel.

Utilizing the American and Jewish Traditions

We seek the cumulative confirmation of tradition not merely because we have a decent respect for the opinions of mankind but also because, in a young country where error has not yet crystallized into clear warning signals, precedent removes the uncertainty which robs our energy of focus and persistence. The Jews in America who find spiritual roots in both the American and Jewish tradition for the important choices of their lives can work with a constant and serene assurance denied to those who catch their directives from every passing wind.

Do you work for the enfranchisement of the Negro through anti-poll tax legislation and for his economic emancipation through the Fair Employment

Practices Act? The ante-bellum human nature arguments of your kindly and cultured Southern friend will not dissuade you if, on top of the inherent logic of your cause, you remember the compassionate justice of Lincoln and the bold challenge of Amos: " 'Are you not the same as the Ethiopians to me, O Israelites?' saith the Lord?"

Do you labor for a more equitable distribution of the goods of industry through strengthening collective bargaining, unemployment insurance, sickness and accident compensation, liberal vacations with pay, severance pay, retirement pensions, profit-sharing bonuses? You will not be discouraged by the rugged individualist claim that these measures strangle thrift and initiative, if you guide yourself by the crusading light of Henry George and the Levitical directives of the Jubilee year from which George drew the inspiration for his life's labors.

Do you believe that, regardless of all this social legislation, the personal virtues of thrift, honesty, careful planning are still essential to the health of the nation? You will find in Ben Franklin's "Poor Richard's Almanack" and in the shrewd admonitions of Proverbs a way of stating these old fashioned ideas that will give them a pointed relevance to the most modern man.

Do you work on the local school committee to free education from corrupt political control or to improve standards of instruction through progressive education associations or for scholarships that all may have a college education who are qualified? The skeptics and the snobs who deny the educability of the common people will not dampen your enthusiasm if, to the powerful symbols of the little Red School House, Abe Lincoln, Booker T. Washington and John Dewey, you add the remarkable intellectual passion of Israel, which declared that an ignorant man could not be a pious man, which held that man criminal who did not teach his child a trade and which made it the noblest duty of Jewish motherhood to see that the words of Torah were never absent from the lips of children.

Do you fight for the civil liberties of unpopular folk like Minneapolis Trotskyists, or Mrs. Earl Browder, or Jehovah's Witnesses or exiled Japanese-Americans? You will not listen to the smug advice of more cautious folk "not to bang your head against a stone wall" if you bring to the memory of Altgeld, Debs, the elder LaFollette and Senator Norris the mighty sanction of the prophets Nathan, Elijah and Jeremiah, who demanded justice for the lowly in the very teeth of arrogant power and regal authority.

Are you enlisted in one of the national associations for world government? You will not be deterred by the isolationists, the imperialists or the cynical ex-liberals if, to the memory of David Lubin, Ivan Block and Woodrow Wilson, you bring the majestic buttressing support of Amos, Isaiah and Micah, who, from the little hillsides of Palestine, preached the world-mindedness, the cosmic consciousness, the global brotherhood implicit in the simple question: "Have we not one father? Has not one God created us all?"

Do you sometimes become discouraged, not by the willful opposition of mean men but by the slowness of the people themselves to understand their own best interests? Draw consolation then from the mellow counsel of Thomas Jefferson:

"The ground of liberty is to be gained by inches. . . . It takes time to persuade men to do even what is for their own good."

And from the Pirke Abot (The Sayings of the Fathers):

"The work is long, the day is short; the workers are few and the Master of the House is urgent. It is not thy obligation to complete the work nor art thou free to desist from it."

Reconstructionism and Jewish Education

By JACOB S. GOLUB

A DISCUSSION of the influence of Reconstructionism on Jewish education must differentiate between the impression it has made on the minds of the professionals in Jewish education and on the practice in the schools. The leading Jewish educators have been very profoundly influenced by Reconstructionism. They are all early graduates of the Teachers Institute, who enjoyed the brilliant and incisive teaching of Dr. Kaplan in the most critical subject, and during their most formative years. Afterwards, Dr. Kaplan continued his influence over them through home study gatherings and through various groups which he formed. Thus they absorbed Reconstructionism from the very beginning of their careers. Besides, they were the type to whom Reconstructionism would naturally appeal. They were Jews to whom Judaism was a problem. They found it difficult to accept the old tradition—indeed they feared they would have to slough it off altogether—and they saw nothing clearly to take its place. Dr. Kaplan showed them a new light by which, they felt, they could walk with assurance and with confidence.

But if the leaders were deeply influenced, they have not managed to translate most of their own beliefs fully into school procedures. Let it be frankly stated, the actual practice of Jewish education is, to this day, still quite traditonal. Reconstructionism as a philosophy motivates Jewish educational practice only to a very slight degree. Nevertheless, the influences are noticeable and worthy of mention.

If Reconstructionism has but a limited effect on Jewish education, that can be attributed to a number of causes. First, there is the natural lag between theory and practice which is common in all spheres of human interest, and especially in a conservative field like education. Second, Reconstructionist philosophy has not been sufficiently implemented in text books and teaching materials, so that a teacher wishing to teach in accordance with it must largely fall back on his own resources. Third, and perhaps most serious, Reconstructionism has as yet no constituency large enough to be effective in demanding that type of education. Jewish education, in its more intensive aspects, is limited wholly to the Orthodox group. The Conservative and the Reform groups seldom intensify their education sufficiently for maximum outcomes. As for Reconstructionist schools, they hardly exist at all, and, even where schools do function under Reconstructionist auspices, the education given there can hardly be said to be in keeping with its philosophy, which demands a maximum of Hebraic elements. Finally, a difficulty not to be overlooked is the fact that Reconstructionism has not as yet formulated a philosophy of Jewish education. That, again, may be the shortcoming of Reconstructionist educators; nevertheless, the fact exists.

Educators Accept Idea of Judaism as a Civilization

And now, having stated how limited have been the achievements of Reconstructionism in Jewish education, let us nevertheless point out how profoundly Jewish education has been influenced by that philosophy. Jewish educators have accepted the basic tenet of Reconstruc-

tionism, that Judaism is a complex of all the elements which normally make up a civilization. Some of them perhaps hesitate to use the term *civilization,* but none of them conceives of the Jewish people as merely a religious group. All agree that their Judaism consists of the elements which Dr. Kaplan enumerates, namely, nationhood, religion, historical continuity, language and literature, law, mores, folkways and art. Among Jewish educators there are few who deny the possibility of a creative Judaism in the Diaspora. All of them either believe in the potentialities of Jewish creativity in the Diaspora, or at least feel the worthwhileness of making the effort to try them out. Palestine's aid may be indispensable to Jewish functioning in the United States, but with that aid American Jewry may add to the total of Jewish values.

The belief of the Jewish educators in the peoplehood of Israel is expressed in Zionism on the one hand and, on the other, in the form of organization which they would like to see American Jewish life assume, namely, that of a national federation of democratically organized local communities.

Education Influenced by Reconstructionist Attitude to Zionism

Educators are believers in Zionism both in its Herzlian and its Ahad Ha-Amist aspects. They see in Palestine both a refuge for Jews and a haven for Judaism. Both phases are important. Jewish children are taught our responsibility for reconstituting uprooted Jewry, and for settling, through a Jewish Homeland, the age-old problem of Jewish wandering. At the same time, they are led to feel that Judaism as a civilization can thrive only if it finds a home in Palestine. The children learn to regard Palestine as one of the spiritual fatherlands of Judaism. The life of the spirit may have more than one fatherland. American Judaism draws richly from its democratic environment. But it also is profoundly influenced by Palestine, even by the limited development which has taken place there to date. Therefore, the educators seek to make the child spiritually at home in Palestine, to know its geography and its present economy, to be familiar with its new forms of social living, to sing its songs, dance its dances, read its books and thrill to its heroism. Considerable headway has been made in introducing the study of Palestine into Jewish schools, though it would be far from accurate to say that the study has been introduced even in most of the Zionist schools. The study of Palestine as a subject, however, is on the increase and, as more suitable textbooks and curricula are prepared, it will definitely hold a place in the Jewish school's course of studies.

Education Influenced by Reconstructionist Attitude to Community Organization

Similarly, the Jewish educator's conception of Jewish nationhood expresses itself in the desire to see American Jewry organized in a national federation of local community organizations. Aside from merely believing in the desirability of organized communities, the educators have sought to realize community organization in their work. Education is particularly an activity of the entire community and the very structure of Bureaus of Jewish Education has been an invitation to community organization. True, these were organized at first mainly on behalf of the Talmud Torahs attended largely by children of the poor, as an extension of philanthropy. The children of wealthier parents usually attend congregational schools which are independently financed and autonomously governed. There was originally no contact between the communal

school and the semi-private institution. Communal educators are, however, gradually bridging the gulf between schooling under private and under communal auspices. The congregational schools are being brought under a system of community supervision even though they may be completely self-supporting. In New York City especially, this communalization has been carried to a fine point where even group denominational differences are recognized, within a communal framework. Thus the various religious groups have each its own supervisors and its own machinery for conducting schools, all organized within the general structure of the Jewish Education Committee.

The solution was not arrived at without considerable trial and error or communal friction. At first, the eductor regarded the synagogue as an obstacle to the communalization of Jewish education, and he resented its interference. Gradually, however, he realized that the synagogue is the basic unit of organized American Jewish life and that ways must be found for integrating it into the communal structure. On the whole the educator's solution seems to be a happy one. True, the community is not one hundred percent united educationally. The extreme Orthodox and the extreme Reform, both extremes, in other words, do not trust the communal agency, but its influence is definitely increasing.

Not only is the principle of community organization practiced by educators but it is also taught to children in schools as desirable subject matter. In all the newer programs there are courses in the Jewish community. A number of texts have already appeared presenting a description of our communal set-up and some attempt to go even further and offer normative programs of group functioning. In addition, concrete projects are undertaken to impress the idea of community on the children. Keren Ami, a fund-raising project, is intended to impress the children with the duties of Jewish self-taxation and also to teach them how intelligently to apportion funds for various Jewish needs, in order to evaluate the relative importance of these needs for the Jewish communal life. Community assemblies are held to commemorate the most important events of the year in order to give the children a sense of *Kelal Yisrael*. On a smaller scale, inter-school gatherings are arranged in order to get the children to feel that their school is only a unit of a larger communal whole. These activities are but the merest beginnings and the instructional programs have been introduced in only a few schools, but the beginning is auspicious.

Education Influenced by Reconstructionist Attitude to Religion and Ethics

Reconstructionism regards Judaism as a *religious* civilization. Here the influence of Reconstructionism on Jewish educators again has been considerable, although it has not reached, in full force, to the classroom. The educators started their careers mostly as secular nationalists. They could not compromise with the old religious tradition and saw no way out of the impasse except to shed all religious belief. Besides, the whole problem seemed to them secondary alongside of what appeared to be the immediate question of Jewish group survival. Life in America seemed temporary. The Jewish child was destined for Palestine; that was his homeland and there his hopes and future were to be centered. Since then, however, the realization has grown upon the educational profession that we and our children will probably spend our lives in America. Viewing Jewish life in America as permanent, the educators naturally

directed their attention to its more permanent values, to ethical and religious behavior. They then began to reflect on religion and its importance in the life of civilized men.

Most educators now recognize the place of religion in life. In the manifestation of orderliness in nature and in the dependability of mankind for satisfying the wants of the individual, they see evidence of God in the universe. This God is the basis of men's idealism, of their devotion to great causes. It is the source of their optimism toward life, of their belief in its worthwhileness, and in the reality of progress. But Jewish educators have not as yet a clear idea of the nature of the Divinity and they are still troubled by the problem of evil.

A few have tried to translate their feelings into a teaching procedure. Unfortunately, however, very little has been done in the teaching of modern religion. Courses in the teaching of Jewish religion are almost unheard of. As for the Bible, the source of our faith, it is still mainly interpreted in terms of the religion of miracle and magic. Only here and there does a bold teacher risk telling his pupils that a certain story is only a legend, or that it was included in the Bible for its religious significance, not for its historical fact. Such teachers are decidedly more numerous today than formerly, but they are still far from a majority. Most teachers are still addicted to teaching miracles. As for the larger aspects of religion, those dealing with the understanding of God or with the norms of social conduct, these are almost totally neglected, except occasionally in a Confirmation class or in the high school department of a Sunday school, where, however, the Jewish aspect of teaching is of a very superficial character.

The only aspect of religious instruction where genuine progress has been made is in teaching Jewish customs and rituals. To be sure, in this sphere, too, most schools still teach customs as religious duties commanded in divinely inspired codes. Moreover, the more difficult phases of ritual observance, such as the Sabbath prohibitions, for example, are generally evaded. Nevertheless, there is much wholesome teaching of customs as joyous folkways. The festivals especially have received new interpretation and observance in most of the Jewish schools. The rationale for other observances too is stressed in order to make the practice intelligible and reasonable for the child.

Education Influenced by Reconstructionist Attitude to Hebraic Culture

In the teaching of Hebrew, Reconstructionists and progressive Jewish Educators see eye to eye completely. Both are interested in interpreting the best in America to Palestine and the best in Palestine to America. And, of course, the most effective medium for that is the Hebrew language. Everything written in Hebrew is, almost *ipso facto,* a contribution to Jewish living. If American Jewry is to function creatively, it is essential that as large a number of Jews as possible know the Hebrew language. Reconstructionists and educators alike have therefore regarded sympathetically the growth of the *yeshivot,* and have supported such ventures as Camp Masad, the Hebrew-speaking camp. In the Hebrew schools they are eager for as intensive a Hebrew program as possible. But at the same time, Reconstructionism, as well as an increasing body of educators has recognized that American Jewry is basically English-speaking, that it would be a mistake to surrender educational ends to mere training in language, when such training may not suffice to enable the child to put the language to actual use. The application of Reconstructionist principles sug-

gests a balance between Hebrew and English subjects, and this is gradually being achieved in our schools.

Education Influenced by Reconstructionist Emphasis on Historic Continuity

Reconstructionism stresses the sense of historic continuity as one of the components of a Jewish civilization. Here, too, the educator and the Reconstructionist meet in their insistence on the adequate teaching of history. Despite the fact that the Jews were among the first historically conscious peoples, history teaching until modern times was rather neglected in our schools. To this very day, history is not taught, or is taught inadequately in most of our large Talmud Torahs. Reconstructionists were, in great measure, responsible for introducing the teaching of history into our large Talmud Torahs and Congregational schools. They, too, have maintained the struggle to present the beginnings of our people normally in sociological terms, without recourse to traditional assumptions of supernatural intervention. They have also striven to bring the teaching of our history down to our own day, rather than leave it at the end of the second Temple period. Most schools of the second Temple period. Mosts chools today teach some kind of history and teach the entire range of Jewish history. True, our children learn our history only on an elementary level and seldom achieve any wider conception of what happened to our people. Nevertheless they at least have the outline of historical continuity.

Education Influenced by Reconstructionist Emphasis on the Arts

Reconstructionism has laid considerable emphasis on Jewish arts and here its influence on Jewish education has been most direct and telling. Music, of course, is now established as having a definite place in the Jewish school. Dramatics, too, creative or imitative, have also flourished in our schools, and are a feature of the festival celebrations as well as of occasional classroom procedure. The graphic arts, though not nearly as widespread as music and dramatics and although largely regarded as an extra-curricular activity have nevertheless won very considerable recognition, as was evidenced by the splendid exhibition of children's and teachers' work arranged last year by Mrs. Temima Gezari at the Museum of Natural History, in New York. The exhibit was impressive by its range of subject matter, the quantity of the work and the quality of its performance. Many other cities such as Chicago, Cleveland or Cincinnati have also done considerable work in this field. But, naturally, out of the many schools in New York City, only a small number was represented. In most schools, art work is still considered an unwelcome intrusion.

Education Influenced by Reconstructionist Attitude to American Democracy

The Reconstructionist seal is set in the outer framework of America. The Jewish educators too recognize that America is the child's setting, the scene in which he lives his life, his primary civilization. The school therefore makes an effort to harmonize the Jewish and the American tradition. American democracy is congenial to Judaism. It is in the spirit of the biblical tradition, of our Passover holiday or of the Maccabean struggle. All these elements and others are utilized in the school to re-enforce the sense of democratic loyalty on the part of our children. For several years there has even been a special publication, "The Jewish School and Democracy," devoted to this purpose. The war especially has afforded many occasions for bringing this message home to the children, and the better schools have

not been slow to take advantage of this motivation.

But there are other facts concerning our life in America which children must also know. Not everything is rosy in American democracy. The treatment of minorities in America leaves something wanting. We Jews have a double relationship to the minority problem; we ourselves are members of such a minority, and, as citizens of the country, we have dealings with other minorities. Thus we teach our children about our duty to respect these minorities and, together with them, to fight for a more democratic way of life.

Our pupils, as they grow older, must also be aware of possible limitations in their careers by virtue of their Jewishness. Career advice is essential both as a restricting factor and as indicative of something to contend with and overcome. Such studies have already found a place in our Sunday school high school classes. They have not yet spread to other schools but in due time they undoubtedly will.

Thus we have seen the influence of Reconstructionist philosophy on Jewish education. To say that Reconstructionism has made deep inroads into our schools might be something of an overstatement. But, on the other hand, the leaders in Jewish education, to the extent that they correctly appraise the demands of Reconstructionism on the Jewish school, are doing their utmost to realize them. Their efforts are already manifest in many promising beginnings which will certainly expand and grow to fuller maturity in the coming decade.

The Arts in American Jewish Life

By JUDITH K. EISENSTEIN

THERE has been a great deal written and spoken in the last years about the importance of the arts in Jewish life in America. It is almost frightening to see the hunger in the hearts of our people which has been stimulated from latency into an active seeking. While great masses are still unroused from their torpor of indifference, urgent calls come from every corner of the country for music, for paintings, for architectural designs, for drama and dancing. This new and growing hunger is frightening, because it must be fed if it is to function as a life force. Frustrated, it will not die peacefully, but will foment an acrid taste of ugliness and decay.

Attempts have been made by individuals and organizations to shoulder the heavy responsibility. Festivals of Jewish Arts have been organized in a number of cities. Bureaus of Education, elementary schools and schools of higher learning have introduced departments of the various arts. National organizations have initiated art programs; synagogues have occasionally commissioned the composition of service music, and, more rarely, the painting of decorative murals. New organizations have come into being, with the arts as their principal concern, such as the Jewish Music forum and the Hebrew Arts Committee of New York. Activities vary from ingrown scholarly research to grand promotion schemes. And all the time the hunger grows and the famine increases.

The Jewish Public for Art

Who are the people who are seeking for Jewish art forms, and what is the nature of their needs?

First of all, there is the generation in this country which stems from the European ghetto, a generation which remembers the *"klein shtetel"*—the mother with a kerchief on her head as she lights the Sabbath candles, the cadences of the cantor chanting the *Neilah* service on Yom Kippur, and the grotesqueries of the Hasidic dance movement. This generation is not young. Its members are fewer as the years go on. They have a deep nostalgia for the sights and sounds of their childhood, and will wipe away a sentimental tear if someone sings them a tune of that day, or dresses up in costume to present them with a dramatic imitation of their own grandmothers. It is a generation for the most part untutored in the highly developed art of the Western world. Only a very small fraction of it has the capacity to recognize the old synagogue tunes after they have been fragmentized and dissipated into a symphonic composition by Ernest Bloch. Even fewer will be touched by pictorial symbols of the old home when those have been rearranged in strange new patterns by Chagall. By and large, that generation craves straight reminiscence, and reminiscence out of an immediate past. In truth, they are not seeking art forms at all. For the time that they may live, there are enough popular *hazanim,* and etchings of old Jews with beards to satisfy. They cannot be our principal concern here.

A second group that seems to be in search of Jewish art expression is at the extreme opposite pole. Here we have a group of conscious or unconscious assimilationists. These are people who have rejected all close ties with their fellow Jews, who spurn the Jewish religion out of what they believe to be conviction, but who are willing to be tempted to look back into the fold for what they term aesthetic values. These people want two types of art expression. They may demand "authentic" folk art, by which they mean some strange and foreign folk dance, song or primitive painting such as will have no duplicate in the arts of any other racial or national group. They will try the wedding customs of Bukharin Jews or will seek out the Purimspiels of the Middle Ages. Failing to find these, they will despair of the existence of any uniquely Jewish art.

Or, on the other hand, they will watch for programs of chamber music or dance recitals which purport to be Jewish and, finding that these do not meet the standards set by Mozart or Schoenberg, by the Russian Ballet or Martha Graham, as their tastes might dictate, they turn away in disgust from both Jewish art and the Jews.

A third group represents the large bulk of affiliated Jews of our own generation. These are the people who have been educated in America. They have been educated by America to a decent appreciation of the arts in their more conventional forms. They are puzzled by Schoenberg and amused by "non-objective" painting. They are just being awakened to the beauty of the ballet, and are buying reproductions of the most generally recognized "great" pictures for their own homes. The Jewish education of these people has been, for the most part, a Zionist one. They know Palestinian folk songs, either remembering them from Hebrew school days or from their Hadassah choral groups. They have forgotten the immediate past of the European ghetto. The *nusah* of the traditional synagogue is as foreign to them as the songs of the Bukharin Jews. The forms bent over the large tomes of the Talmud are only a

proxy memory, out of the pictures on their grandparents' walls.

Yet these are the people who will be the Jews of America. It is these people who are most likely to survive as Jews, whose needs we must answer, and out of whose midst alone we can hope for those creative artists who will express the true emotions of American Jewry.

The Art Needs of the Average Jew

The large middle group does not look, at the moment, like a potential source of creative productivity. It wears too strong an aspect of mediocrity. There is, however, no reason to believe that it cannot or will not give birth to its share of geniuses, or at least, of gifted individuals. What have we to give them? In the field of music, we have a vast lore on the folk level. We have to renew their ties with the tunes of the past, both of the synagogue and of the home. They are ready (and those of us who have tried can testify to this) to accept wholeheartedly the chants of the Bible, fragments of the *nusah,* and great songs of the synagogue, if only these are presented to them with a word of explanation, in simple forms removed from the often chaotic setting of the Orthodox service. They are delighted with the *zemirot,* which they are eager to introduce into their own homes, especially if they have been shown the charm of the medieval poems in their historic settings. Simple choral arrangements of these as well as of Yiddish folksongs and of Palestinian folksongs are desperately needed and wanted.

These people want to hear Jewish art music. There is some, and some of it is of fine quality. This music must be performed for them in the most finished and perfect manner possible. They must be enabled to hear it with the help of explanatory notes. They must have the themes extracted for them and the form of these themes analyzed. They must be able to hear this music over and over again, in recorded form in their homes.

In the graphic arts, to correspond to the folk level in music, there are collections of beautiful ceremonial objects for the synagogue and the home. Until a new ceremonial art shall have evolved, these objects of an older day might be brought out in exhibits, and be reproduced for broader distribution. These, too, like the music, need some form of annotation, just as the silver works of a Paul Revere have been reproduced with accompanying historical notes.

In the fine arts, we must stop quibbling over the "distinctive" Jewishness of paintings. We must accept subject matter, for the time being, as the basis of selection of paintings and sculpture. There are great works of art. These must be brought together; descriptions and analyses of their Jewish elements must accompany them. Fine reproductions must be made which would be worthy of framing so that they, too, can be brought right into the Jewish home.

In the field of the dance, one collection of folk dances of Palestine has been taken up avidly. Dance on the folk level is not as easy to find as are the other arts. However, it is definitely on this level at which the dance must be cultivated. We will have to abandon any purist attitude, and seek out all the experiments of the few Jewish dancers in the folk medium, take them up, try them, and mould them into a genuine folk dance for ourselves. The tradition is a very brief one in the case of the dance, so that we have to start almost immediately with creation.

Art Education vs. Art Promotion

What has been described thus far is not a promotion program for Jewish art. It is definitely an educational program,

one which aims to provide an environment out of whatever art exists at present. It deals not with creation, but with distribution, (except in the case of the dance; architecture and drama must be carried on mainly on the level of creation). There have been proposals made for the stimulation of creativity in all these fields. Contests, commissions and fellowships have been suggested. It may seem unduly conservative to those hustling souls who think in terms of advertising and publicity to say that I have no great faith in these methods.

Though there may be some truth to the contention that lack of support is responsible for the failure of Jewish art to develop in this country, I cannot accept this wholly materialistic interpretation as adequate. It seems at least as true that Jewish art has not developed because there has been no Jewish environment and no range of Jewish emotions which cried for expression in the heart of our young men and women of talent. The cause of communism has not been a highly remunerative one; but it has moved young people, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, to urgent articulation. The great tragedy of the Jews of Europe has had the power to move people who are untouched by any other aspect of Jewish life. Jewish life in America has not been tangible enough nor Jewish religion sufficiently potent to do as much.

We cannot rely on prizes or even publicity to stimulate true artists. We must build a living Jewish environment with whatever means we have at hand. We must renew the memories of a whole past, and we must draw heavily upon the one living and vibrant community, the *yishuv* in Palestine; but at the same time, to impel genuine creation in any of the arts, we must have a dynamic of Jewish emotion, born out of the thinking and seeking of at least one wholesome generation in this country.

This does not mean that we can do without subsidies, and substantial ones, for the fostering of Jewish art. On the contrary, even to carry out the limited program outlined above, only a community-wide support will be adequate. Staffs of trained people must be set to work collecting, editing, annotating the existing art. Recordings, reproductions and broadcasts require highly professional performers and artisans.

At the present time, there are large numbers of such professionally trained men and women in the fields of art who come from Jewish families and backgrounds. But they have preferred to labor in other fields, and their talents are lost to us. This has been due not only to the generally static condition of Jewish artistic life, but perhaps even to a greater extent, to the fact that they have not sensed any strong demand for their services from organized Jewry. Even where individual Jewish organizations have invited the services of Jewish artists and have offered substantial remuneration, the artists have been repelled by the requirement imposed upon them to transform their art into propaganda.

Jewish Art and Jewish Life

If the arts are to function, they must not be regarded as instruments of propaganda. This means that no single organization whose purpose is either philanthropic or political can possibly be regarded as a fitting sponsor for an arts program. It is inevitable that such organizations will force hasty and spectacular performances rather than foster gradual and natural growth. In addition, only those aspects of the arts which are immediately relevant to the purposes of the organizations will be encouraged, to the further distortion of artistic values. Either the religious or the biblical, or the Palestinian, or the Yiddish motifs

will be neglected, and our people will be the poorer for that neglect.

The fulfillment of the promise of Jewish art in America is thus dependent upon the realization of other phases of the Reconstructionist program. The development of art requires an organized community life, a vigorous religious life, a continuous and contentful educational process and close ties to Eretz Yisrael. The expansion of the movement, therefore, and the wider acceptance of its philosophy will undoubtedly help to strengthen the art program in the years to come.

Thus far, we Reconstructionists have tried to do our modest share through the columns of the magazine, and through several published works. Music has, of course, been stressed, but, we fear, at the expense of the other arts. This should be corrected in the next period of our history. But if our concrete contributions have been modest, our hopes for the ultimate development of a beautiful, poetic, artistic Jewish life are far from modest. They are extravagant; and we invite all Jews to join us in this form of extremism.

Jewish Community Organization – As It Might Have Been

By SAMUEL C. KOHS

THERE are occasions when silence is much to be preferred to speech. This occasion may perhaps, be one of them. One might try to build up something of a case for "progress," but the forced evidence would be purely in terms of larger number of dollars raised and of larger numbers of *things,* but hardly in terms of a better Jewish life for individuals and families, or of a richer and more meaningful cultural existence for all of us. Maybe the war has had something to do with this. However, it cannot be made to bear all the blame. War or no war, it is doubtful whether the forces operating in American Jewish life during the past ten years would have lifted the general level of Jewish communal functioning to a higher plane. "What kind of higher plane?" one might well inquire.

Frankly, it is a bit difficult to say. But if one combined a modicum of imagination with a pinch of knowledge, an interesting scene might unfold itself. The following paragraphs represent the past ten years of progress in American Jewish life—progress one *might* have been able actually to record had the communal agencies depicted here existed, and had such events occurred.

One defense against mental and personality disintegration is to develop a life of fancy, to which one can escape not only for comfort, but for hope as well. In dreams we may achieve the hopes which reality blasts for us. Therein lies some of the therapeutic value which, it is hoped, this "summary" will provide.

* * *

The stage is set. The lights are dimmed. The curtain rises on the year 1935, and the

story of the next ten years begins to unfold. For purposes of unity of subject matter, and of logical sequence, specific dates are omitted. . . . The spotlight falls on four symbolic figures:

Hillel University
The American Rabbinical Association
The National Conference for Jewish Communal Service
The National Jewish Research Bureau

Hillel University

Early in 1935, the whole world was electrified by the following announcement which appeared in the American press:

JEWS OPEN COLLEGE

President of United States Sends Message, Representatives of Religious and Cultural Groups Speak.

Washington, January 16.—Hillel University, a non-denominational, co-educational institution, representing the first major contribution of the Jews of America to the higher educational resources for the youth of this and other countries, opened today with impressive ceremonies.

The exercises began with the Academic Procession led by the University's president, Dr. Alfred Leo Cohen, and Dr. Albert Einstein, the great physicist and mathematician. The group included approximately 100 dignitaries representing the academic and religious leadership of this country; the Hillel University faculty of 83, selected from among the leaders of their respective fields of study, all over the world, regardless of color, sex, creed or nationality; and the student body of 369, representing eighteen different religious denominations, four races, and twenty-nine nationalities and ethnic groups.

Addresses were made by (etc.). . . .

The President of the United States in a special message said: "To the other great contributions that the Jewish People have made toward the building and the defense of our country and our civilization, all Americans will note with great satisfaction this further splendid contribution toward the encouragement and the advancement of higher learning. It is appropriate that 'The People of the Book' should, in this most visible, concrete and very effective fashion, demonstrate once again its passion for learning and for the higher values of life. What is especially noteworthy is that the plans of the University contemplate no narrow sectarian limitations. The faculty, the students, the courses of study have all been selected in terms of established worth on the broadest humanitarian levels. All Americans will wish this commendable enterprise 'Godspeed.' "

The services were opened with the "Processional" by Darius Milhaud and closed with the "Recessional" by Ernest Bloch, both compositions especially written for this occasion.

The new University, consisting of twenty-seven buildings, is situated on fifty acres, in Hamilton Park, a suburb of the Capitol.

Etc., etc., etc.

The reason for mentioning this item first in the presentation of a review of progress in Jewish communal organization covering the past ten years, is the fact that American Jews came to realize, during the early part of this century, that a university such as "Hillel" was a basic necessity, to serve as a sort of backbone, to which all the tissues, limbs, and organs of American Jewish life must be bound in order to give all of these the strength, the support and foundation for a healthy, normal functioning of the Jewish body, as a whole.

They recognized that this University should have a dual function; one universal, the other specialized for the Jewish group alone. The first would provide opportunities for education, for teaching and for research, free of any sectarian involvement or bias. The second would provide a point of attachment for all of the previously scattered, independent, contentious, duplicating and conflicting national Jewish organizations. It would provide the basis for the rebirth of a graduate school for training Jewish communal workers. It would be the natural home for all research enterprises inter-

ested in securing facts about Jews and Jewish life in this country and all over the world. In some of its buildings and in its specialized libraries and study halls, specific problems affecting Jewish life and Jewish communal organization would be studied by recognized experts, and plans for the advancement or for the reorganization and the reconstruction of different aspects of Jewish communal life would be formulated.

Such a University, it was recognized, would lend the kind of dignity and prestige to organized American Jewish life that no other Jewish institution or agency could rival, or could achieve, with anything like an equal degree of influence and effectiveness.

Financial support was assured through contributions from the masses of the Jewish people scattered all over the United States, from the hundreds of Jewish Welfare Funds, from hundreds of wealthy Jews throughout the country, and interested persons in foreign countries as well.

Although it is difficult, in this brief period of ten years, to make a complete and satisfactory accounting, and to establish to everybody's satisfaction that the creation of a Hillel University was a sound and desirable move (What would the world be without a few pessimists?), it is generally conceded by non-Jews as well as by Jews that the credits have far exceeded the debits.

The American Rabbinical Association

As a result of efforts covering the past seven years the American Rabbinical Association, which was organized in 1937, has made the following notable contributions, not only effecting a wider involvement of Jews in religious affiliation and religious observances, but influencing, to a greater degree than ever before, Jewish communal activities and practices. Due credit for this must be given the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement, which struck out boldly about ten years ago and emphasized the importance of stressing the content of Judaism rather than the mere pursuit of standardized and inherited patterns, unadapted to the facts and conditions of modern American Jewish life. It laid stress upon Judaism as a civilization, as a culture, of which religion is a part, but not the totality; and it emphasized the close tie between Jewish culture, ethics and religion on the one hand, and American culture, Jewish community life and Palestine on the other.

The American Rabbinical Association is an association of all rabbis and is, in a sense, a unification of the three separate rabbinical organizations for the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox groups. The three separate entities, however, continue to function as sub-divisions of the larger assembly. This provides greater opportunities for joint thinking and common action based upon a recognition of the fact that all three branches of Judaism have a great common ground, that the divergences are of minor importance and that the earlier clear-cut separations made for greater losses than gains for all three groups and for the Jewish people as a whole.

The significant achievements of the American Rabbinical Association during the past seven years may be enumerated as follows:

a. A united front in support of religious and general communal endeavors, as against earlier divisions, disagreements, jealousies, and destructive warfare. This made itself felt particularly in the fields of Jewish education and in the introduction of greater Jewish content and meaning in the conduct and the work of Jewish communal social welfare and other agencies.

b. The furtherance of the Jewish Temple Society Movement, with less emphasis on sermonizing, the introduction of important changes in the fixed recitals from standardized prayer books, greater use of music and meditation as part of the religious experience, the beautification of the synagogue, both interior and exterior, and the broadening of the conception of God, so that those inclined toward agnosticism or atheism would still find themselves at home in the synagogue without any feeling of hypocrisy or insincerity.

There was a good deal of opposition to the establishment of another "sect" in American Jewish life. But in the end, it was realized by Jewish religious leaders that it was far better to modify the internal details of synagogue life and of synagogue function so as not to lose those who needed the synagogue and what it represents in religious recreation, yet who found the Reform, the Conservative and the Orthodox synagogues unsuited to their needs. Better any compromise, they said, than the total loss of any Jew from the religious community.

Whether this was wise or not, only time will tell.

c. The encouragement offered in the establishment of Reconstructionist Fellowship chapters. These groups differ substantially from most brotherhood and sisterhood activities because of their greater concentration on Judaism as a civilization, and on the effort to relate Judaism to the every day activities and realities of Jewish communal living.

d. The improved working relationships with professional social and communal workers. This influence is not limited to the directing heads of Jewish Federations, Community Councils, Welfare Funds and similar centralized or coordinating agencies, but extends to the social workers of the individual agencies, such as those engaged in family welfare, child care, employment services, and all the other functional fields.

e. The influence which the Rabbinical Association exerted in bringing the entire program of training men for the rabbinate under the direction and support of Hillel University, with proper recognition of the divergent beliefs and rituals that characterize Reform, Conservative and Orthodox synagogues. The experience of the National Jewish Welfare Board's Committee on Army and Navy Religious Activities, sponsored by all three religious groups, was very helpful in setting the pattern for this unification and coordination. The Hebrew Union College, The Jewish Institute of Religion, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Dropsie College and the other similar institutions are now part of the Theological Division of Hillel University.

There are some who believe that the older pattern of separate rabbinical institutions, with all of the competition, the misunderstandings in the public mind, the control by limited groups and the inadequacies and limitations involved in all these, was better. But judging by the reaction of the bulk of American Jewry, this new development has a great deal to commend it.

The National Conference for Jewish Communal Welfare

Formerly known as the National Conference of Jewish Social Service, and more recently as the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare, the 1935 Conference changed its name to the National Conference for Jewish Communal Welfare. By this action the membership gave recognition to the fact that, if the Conference is to have any meaning for American Jewish life, it must be more than a Conference of the rank and file practitioners in the various Jewish social service fields; that it must bring back the men and women who represented the top

leadership in Jewish communal work throughout the country; that it must expand its membership to include important lay leaders, rabbis and the large variety of other communal workers, and that it must therefore revise its by-laws so that it might return to its former status of an *action* body, and not continue merely as a debating society or a "Kaffee-Klatch," or, as it was more euphoniously characterized: "a platform, just for discussion purposes."

In 1936 the work of the Conference was divided into three major divisions:

Division A—General Problems of American Life

The committee responsible for the work of this division of the Conference decided to concentrate on five major questions:

a. Problems of Jewish population mobility;
b. Problems of inter-marriage;
c. Psychiatric problems growing out of current stresses and strains in American Jewish life;
d. The nature and extent of anti-Semitism and a general program to deal with various aspects of the problem;
e. Problems of Jewish self-hate, an analysis of conditions creating this phenomenon, with suggestions for dealing with various aspects of this problem.

Division B—Re-evaluations of Jewish Social Service Agencies

The work of this division was distributed among three commisions. One devoted itself to a review of current activities of Jewish family welfare societies throughout the country, and undertook, on the basis of this analysis, to re-evaluate these activities in order to see in what way these agencies could meet more satisfactorily present day needs of individual Jews and of Jewish families. One of the outstanding contributions of this commission was the publication of a booklet on procedures to bring greater Jewish content into Jewish social work, and to make these activities more meaningful in terms of a revived Jewish family life in this country. On the basis of the work of this commission, a number of Jewish family welfare societies changed their names, eliminated their emphasis upon "psychiatric social work," and concentrated on those problems and factors which interfered with the operation of Jewish cultural and ethnic forces for the building of a more integrated and a more satisfactorily functioning Jewish personality.

A second commission concentrated on explorations to make it possible for Jewish philanthropic organizations to pioneer along certain social welfare lines in which neither the government nor the other social welfare organizations in the private welfare fields were concerning themselves. One of the pioneering activities which drew considerable favorable comment from governmental sources and from the general field of social work was the endeavor to translate all social service techniques in terms of "socialization." This new technique involved measurements and evaluations of individual personalities, family group associations and multi-social group relations. On the basis of these measurements, specific technical procedures were projected in order to make for a more well-rounded personality and a better integrated individual, in his family setting and in all his other social relationships and activities.

A third commission devoted itself to the development of a program of integration among the three major fields of Jewish social service: the general activities of Jewish social welfare agencies (family welfare service, child care, care of the aged and the other functional services),

the Jewish community center field, and the general area of Jewish education. This commission published a brochure in 1939, which was accepted and adopted by these three major branches of Jewish social work. Already, excellent results are being demonstrated by this inter-penetration of these three varieties in a united endeavor to serve Jewish men, women and children and Jewish families. The work of this commission helped break down the antipathies and the suspicions, and perhaps the occasional conflicts which manifested themselves, in greater or less degree, from time to time among the highly specialized workers in all of these three fields. We can now say that every Jewish social worker is not only a technician who understands case work techniques and practices, but is also, in a sense, a Jewish center worker and a Jewish educator. Similarly, the individual Jewish social welfare agencies, their executives and their board members, reflect the same progressive developments. Now boards of directors of a Jewish family welfare society are indistinguishable, in philosophy, outlook, interests and participation, from similar boards of Jewish community centers and from Jewish educational societies.

Division C—Promotional Activities

The three specific projects which the Conference undertook to promote, beginning in 1936, were the following:

a. *The Graduate School for Jewish Communal Service.* The name of the school was changed from the Graduate School of Jewish Social Work to the Graduate School for Jewish Communal Service. With the establishment of Hillel University, the school became a graduate division, and was reaccepted into the National Association of American Schools of Social Work, from which it previously had lost its place because it lacked affiliation with an undergraduate educational institution of recognized standing.

With its transfer under the direction of Hillel University, the entire program, courses of study and faculty were modified. Although the school was located in Washington, D. C., opportunities for field work were made available in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., Baltimore, and in a number of other communities.

Under this new arrangement, the Graduate School for Jewish Communal Service severed its affiliation with the New York School for Social Work and developed a faculty and a curriculum that was entirely under the direction of Hillel University and of the school itself.

In his 1943 address to the graduating class, and to a large number of professional and lay leaders who came from all sections of the United States, the Dean of the school commented: "We are on the eve of a genuine and much hoped-for renaissance of Jewish life in America. Thanks to the vision and the cooperative spirit of our Jewish communal leaders and our professional workers, we have succeeded in mapping a program for Jewish community action on a local, national and international scale that will not only assure a continuous and direct concern with the basic problems facing Jews in this country and all over the world, but will also guarantee more effective positive achievement for Jewish life here and abroad.

"The 461 Jewish social workers and the 3,248 laymen whom we have served in one way or another during the course of the past academic year, by means of our courses on the campus and through our field and extension courses and services, together with those who have been graduated in previous years, provide a substantial army, which has made these achievements possible. We wish to commend all of our religious bodies, our organized labor groups, our philanthropic and welfare organizations, and thousands

upon thousands of individual Jews who have manifested such great interest in our training program and who have given so unstintingly of their efforts and their material support during these past few critical years." In passing, attention should be called to the fact that every progressive school of social work in this country has come to Hillel University and to its Graduate School in order to profit from some of the pioneer work in training people for communal service (versus "charity"), particularly on those problems involving inter-group relationships within our own Jewish group; e.g. differences based on cultural levels, religious background, national origins, linguistic ties, and economic and social stratifications.

b. *The integration of the general fields of social work with Jewish Center work and with the fields of Jewish education.* This was another promotional activity of the Conference. Some of the results achieved have already been recounted. The only comment we need make here is to point out that the Conference recognized that the differences which segregated Jewish communal workers in the past were purely artificial and, to an extent, unnatural. An examination of the philosophy and objectives of each separate field clearly revealed that there was a very large common denominator of philosophy, techniques and objectives common to all fields. When the basic question was asked, "How can we all best advance and enrich Jewish life and make it more meaningful?" previous differences that existed were very largely resolved.

c. *Research.* In 1937, the Conference undertook to list the various national and local organizations active in social research. It was discovered that some 43 organizations were interested or engaged in gathering information dealing with various aspects of Jewish life in America. The yield was insignificant and much of it of little real scientific value. Everyone was hungering for "more facts," but no organization was making any aggressive or consistent effort to meet that need in any effective fashion. The Conference, therefore, undertook to promote the creation of a National Jewish Research Bureau, which came into being in 1940.

At the present time, the National Jewish Research Bureau is a division of Hillel University. Its budget for the current year is in excess of $150,000. Two years after its creation, it published an interesting booklet entitled "A Ten Year Program for Jewish Research." This program outlined not merely the basic questions on which sound research must be done, but it also set forth the objectives to be achieved by gathering such information. An interesting aspect of the functioning of this Research Bureau is the fact that many members of the faculty of Hillel University are available for the planning and the supervision of these research projects, and the students of the Graduate School for Jewish Communal Service are utilized as research assistants in the general research program.

Some time in the early part of this year (1945), the National Jewish Research Bureau is planning to issue reports on three completed studies. One of them is expected to revolutionize fund-raising methods. Another challenges current practices in Jewish-Christian relationships and suggests a five-point program for the future. A third concerns itself with the introduction of Jewish values in the Jewish home.

Attention should be called to the fact that a very close relationship exists between various divisions of the Conference and the activities and programs of the National Jewish Research Bureau.

* * *

These last lines are being written as the rest of the world has gone off to

its slumbers. One could continue wandering on and on in one's imagination and reveal a Jewish world which one craves to see, but which does not exist even in embryonic form. To force one's imagination further is tiring. And by this time, the reader may have become equally tired.

It is sad to have to confess that there is not very much that one can say about the "progress" in Jewish communal organization during the past ten years. The reasons for this situation will be obvious to those who are in close contact with the men and women who are actually engaged in one phase or another of the "Jewish community business."

One of these reasons is that a large proportion of our Jewish communal leaders operate from very inadequate, if not poor, motivations. Too many of them are interested in organizational prestige. Too many lose themselves in abstract theories about "rights," "unity," "nationhood," "divided allegiance." What the *Volksmassen* want and hunger for, and what they need, is somewhat remote from their minds. Too many are concerned with their personal status, and their influence as Jews with the non-Jewish world. Too few are concerned with what can be done to make it possible for the average Jew to walk the streets of America with dignity, with self-respect, with a full appreciation of his worth, and inspired by the knowledge, not only of what he has contributed to make this country and this world what it is, but of what he can still contribute to make it even better. Fortunately, there is a significant number of exceptions among our Jewish leaders, and therein lies our hope for the future.

As far as Jewish social workers are concerned, measured by the standard which made Jewish social workers significant personalities in the past, we find the general run of the personnel perhaps at its lowest level in generations. On the one hand, Jewish social workers are too much engrossed in fund-raising. A man's worth is measured by the sums of money he can raise in campaigns. Important lay leaders in a community will evaluate the competence of a social worker on his ability to raise huge sums. They look at the "dollars and cents" record.

In addition, Jewish social workers are very much confused in respect to their own scale of values. If some actual research were done on this score, we might find a very revealing situation of contradictions, confusion, lack of clarity and great individual differences in philosophy and standards. They are torn by all sorts of loyalties, some economic, some political, some religious, some Zionistic, some assimilationist—they are indeed a group of straying sheep. Jewish social workers are, in large measure, very much mixed up on their objectives, are uninspired by any vision of a revitalized Jewish life in America, and their general thinking on this subject has very little depth or breadth. On the whole, they are unoriented on problems of American and world Jewish life. There has been no research of any consequence to keep them enlightened. There is no knowledge; there is no planning, and most of them are overwhelmed by feelings of inferiority and insecurity. But here too, we Jews are fortunate in that there is a significant number of exceptions among the social work group. Perhaps here too lies our hope for the future.

As far as the rabbinate is concerned, the writer feels he had better leave this subject alone. Suffice it to say, that, in our Jewish communal endeavors, not enough recognition has been accorded to the kind of leadership and inspiration which many rabbis can give in order to provide significance and meaning to the conduct of Jewish communal affairs. Of

course, there are all kinds of rabbis just as there are all kinds of Jewish communal leaders and all kinds of Jewish social workers. Here, too, we are fortunate in that there is a considerable number of the rabbinate who, if given the opportunity, could help build Jewish community life so as to achieve some of our unrealized dreams.

Whether we will have a better story to tell in 1955, when another summary might be made of "the past ten years of progress in community organization," will depend very largely on whether the outstanding, influential lay leaders, the more articulate and the more thoughtful of the Jewish social workers, and that substantial portion of the rabbinate devoted to communal interests above their self interest will be able to get together and jointly think and plan through the kind of programs and projects that will help put Jewish life in America on a more satisfactorily functioning basis.

Toward that end, the Reconstructionist Movement is whole-heartedly and energetically dedicated. May its spreading influence light Jewish communal torches in every city throughout the country so that we may all march together toward a better, finer, more meaningful Jewish life, not only here in the United States of America, but all over the world as well.

Toward a Religion of Democracy in America

By IRA EISENSTEIN

IN the fierce war now raging throughout the world, nations are pitted against nations in a life-or-death struggle. How this struggle will turn out we already know; the Axis Powers are outnumbered and outweighed. The United Nations will inevitably defeat the Nazis and the Japanese in battle. But the military victory will not indicate how closely the Axis came to winning, time and again; nor will it reveal the fanaticism and the furious intensity with which the enemy was equipped for the war. Though we hammer the Nazis and the Japanese to submission, we should not ignore, or forget, the utter abandon with which the enemy threw himself into the fray, the self-sacrifice which he was prepared to make, the profound conviction of the rightness of his cause which sustained him against overwhelming odds.

It seems clear that the enemy has displayed all the signs of religious fanatics, dedicated and consecrated to a faith which is neither Christian nor Jewish. In the case of the Nazis, it is the religion of Nazism; for the Japanese, it is the religion of Japan. And it should be equally clear to us by now that military defeat of these nations will not eliminate the dangers they represent; for, if their religions survive, they will resurrect their strength, and challenge the other nations again. A renewed threat will find us particularly vulnerable if, in the meantime, we have not raised democracy, for which we fight, to the level of *our* religion, and enable it to imbue us with the necessary faith, fortitude and power.

That Nazism, for example, is a modern —and terrible—religion, has been observed before by publicists and students of religion. Yet one hears, again and

again, that the Nazis are out to *destroy religion,* that they are anti-religious, that they burn synagogues and desecrate churches, and violate the freedom of worship; and these are mentioned to challenge the assertion that Nazism is a religion. Clarification is certainly in order.

Nationalism as Religion

Historically, religions came into being when a group—family, clan or nation—offered salvation to its members. People seeking security from danger, meaning in suffering, consolation for mortality, courage to face adversity, in sum, seeking a sense of the goodness and worthwhileness of life, found them in those beliefs, practices, standards and rituals which the group devised. As part of the complex of practices and rituals, there were invariably the commemoration of historic events, the glorification of heroes, the sanctification of great writings, and the obedience to prescribed ethical norms. Whenever a group developed these forms, it was developing its religion.

In the popular mind, a religion, to be a religion, must be ancient, bearing a long history and tradition, and must be identified with some supernatural event. Heretofore, it is true, religions have claimed for themselves a supernatural origin. This view, however, represents a narrow conception of religion, its nature and its actual operation in human life. When people's conception of the universe involved the existence of both visible and invisible powers, they posited the existence of gods beyond the senses — and hence beyond the power of men. These gods had to be won over to the side of men's struggle for life abundant.

But the progress of science has compelled a revision of men's conception of the universe, and of the forces which must be reckoned with in achieving "salvation." Nevertheless, the search for a sense of the goodness and the worthwhileness of life has persisted. In modern times, people have sought their salvation through the meaning and purpose in life which have been vouchsafed to them by the nation to which they belong, in addition to any other groups or associations of which they are a part. National economic life has sought to provide the physical necessities; national culture has sought to satisfy the need for beauty and interest; national history has been taught to give the citizens their orientation to the history of the world, and to direct their lives along purposeful and meaningful channels.

While the forms which various national religions have taken are always reflections of the distinctive civilizations which gave them birth, the content of those religions have not been uniformly ethical. We must learn to understand that religions, like other powerful forces in human life, can be good and bad; religion, *per se,* is not necessarily beneficent in its effect upon its adherents, or upon the world. To call Nazism a religion, therefore, is not to blind ourselves to the fact that it is vicious and destructive; but on the other hand, we shall gain nothing, and lose much, if we fail to recognize that it is a religion. Nazism does not destroy religion as such; it destroys its rival religions, Christianity and Judaism. It does not forbid worship; it merely forbids the worship involved in religions other than its own. It destroys churches and synagogues; but it sets up its own shrines, deifies its own heroes, sanctifies its own writings, commemorates its own historic events, and sanctions its own brand of "ethics."

Wanted—a Religion of Democracy

To counter the evil forces which religions like Nazism have let loose upon the world, the democracies must give to their ethics and standards the authority of a religion. The failure to raise democracy to the level of a religion may be re-

sponsible for prolonging the war — or even for losing the peace. Pitted against the blind believers in the religions of hate and brute force, fighters for democracy can only be half-hearted and easily discouraged, if they are not fired by a fervent faith in a cause equal in stature and weight to those causes for which the enemy fights. We are constantly being told that Americans do not know what they are fighting for. Sometimes the goal is defined as "the American way of life"; but that way of life has been so vaguely formulated that its propelling force is negligible. In addition, Americans become confused when they are told that this "way of life" offers freedom of religion, as though the way of life were not itself a religion. One can understand men dying for freedom of religion; but one can better understand their willingness to die for *their* religion. If democracy were presented as their religion, they would know for what they were fighting.

What does it mean to make a religion of democracy? Better: what would it mean to make a religion of democracy in America? It means becoming keenly aware of the full potentialities of democracy for the salvation of men and nations. It means so believing in democracy as to ascribe to it the validity of natural law; believing that the principles of democracy correspond to the very structure of human society, that the realization of its principles spells the realization of all that makes life worthwhile, and the denial of its principles spells destruction for the human race. It means believing in the fundamental truth of its doctrine in the same spirit and with the same fervor that characterized the belief of earlier generations in their historical, revealed and supernatural faiths. It, therefore, means, as well, conceiving of God as the Power in the Universe and in ourselves, that makes for freedom, justice, peace, the dignity and worth of the individual and harmonious cooperation among individuals and groups. In other words, it means identifying God with the sum total of all the forces making for the realization of democratic ideals. This would constitute the basic content of a religion of democracy.

The form which such a religion of democracy would take in America would be American. That is to say, it would consist of the writings, laws, events, heroes, traditions and mores which embody and symbolize the fundamental doctrines of democracy. Thus, we should have a religion which would be *democratic (and universal) in content, and national in form.*

It is extremely important to stress that formula, because, in many people's minds there is a definite dichotomy between national religions and universal religions. It is generally assumed that national religions represent a retrogression from a higher stage of development. The questions are asked: Is not the world now suffering from the revival of national religions, such as those of the Nazis and Japanese? Can we look with anything but horror at the emergence of a national cult?

These questions are relevant and cogent. There is no doubt but that much harm has come to mankind from chauvinism, national pride, ambition and aggression resulting from national religions. But it is equally true that we make a serious mistake in assuming that, since some religions which are national in form are vicious and destructive, they are necessarily so because they take that form. The fact is that so-called universal religions have been responsible for aggression and war; while other so-called national religions have been a potent (if not altogether successful) force for peace and justice.

The distinction between a national re-

ligion and a universal religion is really not an accurate distinction. A religion that arises out of the experience and aspiration of a nation is not necessarily inimical to the best interests of other nations. If the *content* of a national religion stresses the lust for power and aggrandizement, then, of course, it is bound to lead to conflict. If, on the other hand, a national religion (national in form) emphasizes cooperation and brotherhood, equality and freedom, not only for the members of the nation, but for all men, it is bound to be motivated by purposes which are of universal significance and benefit.

Similarly, so-called universal religions may be only national religions expanded in such a way as to make them seek universal acceptance. In that instance, the religion would not be completely fulfilled if only the underlying principles are universally adopted; it would expect the adoption of its institutions, laws, ethics and sancta. In this respect, a universal religion is a national religion (in content) with imperialist ambitions. On the other hand, if such a religion is universal in the sense that it is based upon principles universally applicable, there is no objection to having each nation express those principles in its own language, and in terms of its own history, heroes, events and laws.

The last mentioned type of *universal religion* is the kind which would best describe the religion of democracy in America: universal in its adherence to the principles of democracy applicable everywhere, American in the unique form which it would take in our country.

Such, in fact, are the form and content of Judaism. The Jewish religion has always been the religion of the nation, rooted in the history, experience, and institutions of the Jewish people. But the Jewish religion has been built on universal principles, applicable to all peoples. The Jewish view of the ideal future calls for the adoption by the nations of those basic universal laws, known as the Noachite laws, which govern spiritual religion and high ethics. Jews did not look forward to the time when the gentiles would adopt the nationhood of Israel. They did look forward to the time when all men would acknowledge the sovereignty of God and embody in their respective civilizations those principles of human relationship which *corresponded* to the principles underlying Judaism.

The Religion of Democracy In the Making

The thesis that we ought to cultivate the religion of democracy in America is based not only on the belief that such a religion is essential for the preservation of our ideals and the ultimate preservation of what we call civilization; it is based upon the fact that such a religion is already in the making, that evidences of its emergence are already apparent, and that the cultivation of such a religion of democracy would be only a matter of developing consciously what heretofore has been growing up unconsciously.

The universal principles of democracy were functioning principles at the very birth of the American nation. The United States came into being through an act of revolt against tyranny. The ideals of equality and freedom were active ideals when the basic institutions of American life were established. In addition, the people of America, who now constitute the large mass of the citizens come from their own "Egypts," and are not likely soon to forget, nor are they eager to forget, that they were once slaves in those lands. In the course of over a century and a half, they have had to struggle, sacrifice and even bleed for their right to the promised land; and they have had bred in them a love of those ideals which

form the foundations of their new, common faith. The soil is therefore prepared for the full growth of a religion which shall be American in form and democratic in content.

That soil has already begun to yield the distinctive American sancta which embody and symbolize democracy. On Decoration Day, thousands of Americans reverently place wreaths on the graves of soldiers fallen in battle. On Independence Day, large meetings are held, and speeches are delivered in which the orators refer to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. On Thanksgiving Day, the President of the United States leads the nation in prayer, while multitudes gather in houses of worship to give utterance to their sense of gratitude for blessings received. On Armistice Day, Americans stand in silence for two minutes; buglers blow taps and a wreath is placed on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. On "D" Day the President called for public prayer; and on the eve of Election Day, he habitually delivered a prayer over the radio.

There is always solemnity and awe at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; there is always a sense of holiness in the military cemeteries; the singing of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" always evokes the same emotions as the chanting of a hymn. Why? Because the religion of democracy has already begun to function.

It is interesting to observe that, even though the founders of the American nation did not, by any means, claim supernatural power or wisdom in the formulation of its basic principles or in the writing of its basic documents, subsequent generations of Americans have gradually come to revere these men and their achievements in a spirit comparable to that in which saints are revered. Among the more traditionally minded, the belief is prevalent that these founding fathers could do no wrong; that they were endowed with a wisdom and vision not generally given to ordinary men; that the instruments they forged will endure forever, because they were somehow divinely guided. Americans brought up on the traditional religions are, naturally, hesitant about raising the founders of the Republic, and some of their noble successors, to the rank of prophets and sages. They have been reared in the belief that there is only one true religion (namely, that which they profess), and they are therefore wary of even considering any other complex of ideas, ideals or principles as belonging in the same category.

In spite of that reluctance, however, several developments have occurred. One is the practice of incorporating some of the teachings of the American spiritual leaders into the sermons, liturgy and hynms of American churches. This is done, in the more progressive institutions, on the theory that the principles of the Judeo-Christian tradition underlie the exalted utterances of American statesmen, poets and philosophers. Another development is the creation of music and literature, on a high religious level, inspired directly by thoughts of American history and dreams of the American destiny. In line with this second development is the growth of myth and legend, woven about the personalities of great Americans. An interesting collection of such myths is to be found, for example, in a volume published some years ago, entitled, "Myths After Lincoln," by Lloyd Lewis.* Some lines from this volume will throw much light upon the growth of American religion:

"Around the evening fires, in cave and hut, old men retold the hero-tales they had heard in their boyhoods, and out of the mists national patron saints and deities appeared. Eventually it was natural

* 1941, Reader's Club, New York.

to say that these heroes had been gods who had come disguised as men, to live awhile with their chosen people and then to sacrifice their lives in order that the common folk might regain the Almighty's favor. Often, as these beliefs developed, the friendly god came to life over and over again, dying and returning. . . .

"The myth of the dying god is one of the oldest, one of the commonest, in the chronicles of folk-beliefs. . . . As the races grew up, they learned only to conceal partially their trust in such superstition, not to kill their beliefs. . . .

"The day was 1865 — time for the dying god of America to come — and to die. . . .

"As Lincoln lay in his Springfield tomb, the national dreams, pride, hope, fear, and superstition had some one to cling to. The pattern of the American god had been filled. . . .

"At the end of the war he had been the chief American hero; assassination had elevated him into mythology."* (Recently Earl Robinson composed a cantata entitled, "The Lonesome Train," a legend about Lincoln, embodying the mystery ascribed to this more-than-human person.)

Another development has been the ritual of American holy days and holy objects. Americans consider as sacrilege the irreverent use of the flag. There is, in fact, an entire volume devoted to the rules and regulations governing the handling of the Stars and Stripes. No American would dare to remain seated when the National Anthem is sung; his fellow Americans would treat him much the same way as they would treat a worshiper who misbehaved in a house of worship.

Is there a concept of God which motivates and unites the whole? The truth is that the religion of democracy in America has not been without its belief in God, nor without specific references to God in state documents, addresses, poetry and liturgy. The Declaration of Independence refers to the "Creator" who has endowed us with inalienable rights. "My fathers' God, to Thee. . . . " is sung as the second stanza of one anthem. Lincoln prophesied that, "under God," this nation would have a new birth of freedom. And more recently, President Roosevelt prayed, before D-Day and before Election Day.

To be sure, it is not always easy to distinguish clearly when the term *God* is being used with the old supernatural connotation associated with Jewish and Christian religions, and when with a more general democratic and humanist connotation. Very much of the religious climate of America is governed by the currents of traditional religions, and undoubtedly the term God is interwoven with many Judeo-Christian associations in the minds of those who make use of it. But it is also true that the concept God, as used in America, is to a great extent, colored in its significance by the rational philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Modern scientists, poets and essayists have poured new meanings and old ones reinterpreted into the traditional vessel, God. New, native experiences have enriched the apperceptive mass against which the awareness of God is felt.

Thefore, when a contemporary American poet, like Russell Davenport, in "My Country," speaks about seeking God, it is extremely doubtful whether he has in mind the God conceived in terms of the experiences of certain ancient Jews or Christians within the framework of Judaic, or Roman, or any civilization other than the American. Davenport's democratic theology might well apply to other civilizations; but when he pleads for the rediscovery of God, he addresses himself

* Pages 349-352, passim.

to all Americans in the name of America.

Thus far, we have attempted to point out that the democracies, and democracy itself, faces an enemy which has made a religion of its brutality and lust for conquest; that unless we counter by raising democracy to the level of a religion, we shall not be strong enough to win out in the end; that, despite popular notions about the character and history of religions, the modern forms of religion are legitimate expressions of organized faith; that there is no inherent danger in creating a religion of democracy in America, since such a religion would be national only in form, but universal in content, and hence not narrow and chauvinistic; and that, in actuality, such a religion of democracy is already emerging on the American scene.

The Task Before Americans

The task before Americans, therefore, is to hasten the growth of this potentially beneficent development. As we have said before, Americans must now plan consciously to do what is being done slowly and without deliberation. It will, therefore, be henceforth necessary to prepare suitable liturgies for the observance of democratic holidays in the spirit of reverence, rituals and liturgies which more explicitly articulate the religious implications of democracy. It will be necessary to prepare curricula and syllabi for the teaching of American civilization in our schools in such a way that the children will regard their place in it as a sacred obligation and opportunity. Democracy should signalize the great moments in the life of the individual—birth, initiation, consecration or confirmation, and any other, adapted from the historical religions or created anew, which might help to impress upon the American, at periodic stages in his life, the sense of participation in a noble and inspiring enterprise. It will be necessary, in addition, to prepare, for popular reading and study, the sacred literature of democracy, its "scriptures"—those narratives, poems, essays, proverbs, speeches and homilies which give classic utterance to the religious ideals of democracy. In addition, there should be the "Talmud" of democracy, that body of law, and the discussion of law, which reveal the democratic soul striving after righteousness.

We, of the Reconstructionist movement, are perhaps qualified to appreciate the wonderful potentialities of a religion of democracy in America, because we have been trained to understand religions in terms of the civilizations of which they are expressions. We have understood the integrality of religion and life. We have sought to reduce the duality of church and state to an essential unity, so that religion shall have relevance, and society shall have religion.

Looking ahead, therefore, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of *The Reconstructionist* magazine it seems to us that we shall not have performed our task on the American scene until we shall, besides our other projects, have attempted to make a contribution toward the exposition of American democracy as religion. The precise form of this contribution will have to be determined in the years to come.

Correspondence

JEWS THAT PROVOKE ANTI-SEMITISM

Sirs:

I have read the article on anti-Semitism in the January 26th issue. Your diagnosis of the cause of anti-Semitism is very correct, and the cure suggested very logical. But what I want to ask is: Are we right in putting the entire blame of anti-Semitism on the Gentiles? Perhaps we too are in a measure to be blamed. The Rabbis of the Talmud ask, "Who is a wise man?", and they answer, "One who observes his own impropriety. Now then, let us examine our shortcomings and see whether we ourselves are not responsible in some degree for aggravating anti-Semitism.

You will admit that we have in our midst unscrupulous people who use unethical business methods, we also have in our midst people who display their wealth in a vulgar fashion, and people whose behavior in public places is obnoxious. These factors to my mind are responsible for the spread of anti-Semitism. And if we want to minimize the anti-Semitic feelings, we must educate our own people, and if necessary use measures that will compel them to change their ways. Why not have the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Congress that combat anti-Semitism, use their organizations for tracing some of those unscrupulous people and making them understand that they will have to change their methods or they will be black-listed in the Jewish community, and excluded from all Jewish organizations and Temples? And if this will not help, we should report them to the authorities and let the authorities deal with them. Something must be done in this matter, if we want to safeguard our security in America. We cannot stand idly by and let things stand as they are, for anti-Semitism is rising rapidly here.

Our Sages say, "Woe to the generation whose defender becomes its accuser." Yes, woe to us who have to make accusations against our own people. But, did not our Prophets also make accusations again their people whom they loved so much? I would suggest that our outstanding leaders get together and discuss this serious problem thoroughly, to see what can be done to stop the rise of anti-Semitism. It is my sincere belief that, as things stand now, the situation looks very dark for our people. I do hope that I am mistaken.

ABRAHAM LEBOW

Comment on a Statement by Chaplain Sandrow

Sirs:

I would be grateful for space enough in your periodical to register protest and discomfort in connection with the following excerpt from Chaplain Sandrow's otherwise unexceptionable article in your latest issue:

"They (the returning chaplains) do not want to be made buffers between petty people contending for congregational honors or offices; travelling salesmen for God, pleading with mothers to bring their children to services; purveyors of soporific lectures to non-congregational bodies who use the church or synagogue center as a meeting place. . . . Now, none of these activities can in themselves be considered unnecessary or wrong."

Gor a maisseh! Since when is it a good and necessary thing for anyone—let alone a man of God—to act as a buffer between petty people contending for honor or office? Or to purvey soporific lectures even to congregational bodies? I protest against encouragement of either of these activities. My discomfort arises only from the possibility of some personal connection with the second.

MAURICE SAMUEL

On Hanukkah and Christmas in the Schools

Sirs:

After reading your editorial in the Jan. 12th issue I thought you might be interested in the following:

About ten years ago, when I was teaching

in a public school in Atlanta, Ga., I presented a Hanukkah program as part of the Christmas celebration in the school. It was so well received that we made it an annual affair. The following year I moved to New Orleans but when Hanukkah came, one of my colleagues (non-Jewish) wrote me that she had carried out the Hanukkah program in the same manner as in previous years.

When I recounted the story to friends in New Orleans, they were greatly surprised and commented that it could never be done in this community.

This year my child entered Public School for the first time. As Hanukkah approached, I visited the principal and told her about my experience in Atlanta. After securing the approval of the Assistant Superintendent, she told me to prepare my program. Consequently, at the Christmas celebration of the entire school, I presented a Hanukkah program in which most of the Jewish children participated. There are approximately 50 Jewish children in the school. The program was well received. But outstanding was the talk on tolerance and good will presented by the principal who had only heard of Hanukkah a year ago. This same principal was so impressed with the program that she hopes to make it an annual affair.

In one of the classrooms, the teacher (non-Jewish) required a composition on "Why I Celebrate Christmas." For the Jewish children, however, she substituted Hanukkah. At art period, the Jewish children made Hanukkah greeting cards while the others worked on Christmas greeting cards.

I call this effort to your attention because I presume you will be interested to know that in the Deep South, we too, are concerned with Jewish problems and are attempting to cope with them.

Bessie Geffen Wilensky,
New Orleans, La.

More on Reconstructionism and the Jewish Community Center

Sirs:

I read with interest your answer to the questions presented by Mr. Julius Fligelman of Los Angeles in a recent issue of The Reconstructionist and Mr. Frank Weil's comment on that correspondence. You will recognize that my interest is a real one because the questions which Mr. Fligelman submitted to you were presented to him by me, and because I am President of the Midwest Section of the National JWB.

It seems to me that if the statement in your answer to Mr. Fligelman's letter, which reads as follows:

> "In addition it should provide for the religious needs of its members,"

is to be construed to mean that the members of the Center are to be furnished with all of their religious needs to the exclusion of the services which they may receive from established congregations, then Mr. Weil is right. I do not believe that the community centers can or should attempt to replace the synagogues.

It seems clear to me, however, that the Center is a place where religious practices and religious studies should be available, so that, in truth, "all forms of religious expression may be able to compete and the most valid ones prevail," as you said in your reply to Mr. Fligelman.

I believe this because the Center ought, necessarily, to be objective in such studies, and will furnish a very fine meeting place for the purpose of such discussion. Nor need such a program militate against such religious practices as are within the scope of the beliefs of the Center members.

Mr. Weil's statement that the Center recognizes "cultural pluralism" is correct, but it does not follow that it will support and freeze all of the differences as they now exist. It ought to be the meeting place where the differences can be resolved in the light of objective discussion.

I hope that these comments from a layman will result in a wide discussion of the problems raised by my original set of questions.

Josiah E. Brill,
President, Midwest Section,
Jewish Welfare Board.

REALITIES AND VALUES

(*Continued from Page* 8)

esting contrast to *our* first issue, ten years ago when we published a full statement of our principles. We hope that, in the course of time, Conservative Judaism will formulate its principles, clearly and unmistakably.

▼

THE DECISION OF THE National Conference of Christians and Jews to edit a volume of texts from the Bible for reading in the public schools is a wise one. Bible reading, like Christmas, is there to stay. We believe, as we have previously written, that the only way to deal with the Christmas problem is to add Hanukkah to it. And the only way to deal with the Bible reading question is to get the three main religious groups to come together and agree on what ought be read and what ought be omitted. We are confident that the representatives of the three religious groups will find a vast amount of material in the Bible which they can all read or listen to in wholehearted agreement—and from which the children will derive much inspiration.

▼

SOME TIME AGO WE COMMENTED favorbaly on the joint statement on world peace issued by Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religious bodies. At that time we urged that steps also be taken for implementing the principles agreed on. We were, of course, not the only voice raised in urging measures to give effect to the purpose of organized religion in striving for a just and lasting peace. Some have gone so far as to suggest that the churches be represented at the Peace Conference or Conferences. That is something which we would hardly recommend. Experience in religious leadership does not necessarily qualify one for participation in political negotiation. The record of the churches whenever they have directly intervened in government has not been a most creditable one. But a suggestion recently made in Congress has our wholehearted endorsement. It was made by Representative Louis Ludlow of Indiana. He suggests that Congress arrange for a conference of leaders of all religious denominations to meet with Secretary of State Stettinius, and try to arrive at an agreement on basic measures that must be taken to assure a peace reflecting the religious idealism of the nation.

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This Tenth Anniversary Issue is a double number. Due to the shortage of paper, we are able to promise only 19 issues for the coming publication year. We hope you will understand our position if the last issue of Vol. XI is numbered 19 instead of 20. Extra copies of *this issue may be obtained* at a small cost.

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

DAVID POLISH is rabbi of Temple Israel, Waterbury, Conn., and a frequent contributor to THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

JACOB L. WEINSTEIN is rabbi of K.A.M. Temple, Chicago, Ill., and a contributing editor of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

THANK YOU FOR A HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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